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BY Ethan Gutmann

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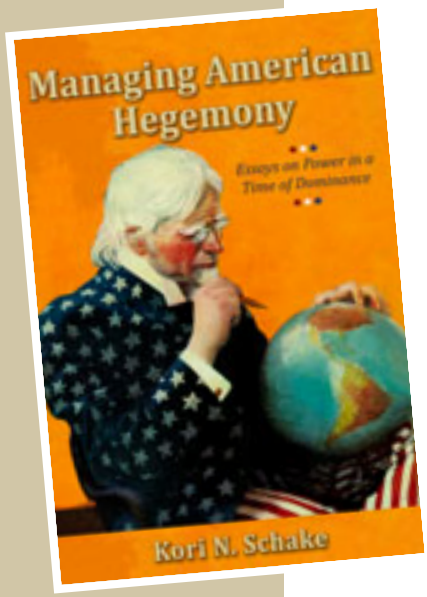

Managing American Hegemony

Essays on Power in a Time of Dominance

BY KORI N. SCHAKE

Schake examines key questions about the United States' position of power in the world, including Why is the United States' power so threatening? Is it sustainable? Does military force still matter? How can we revise current practices to reduce the U.S. cost of managing the system? What accounts for the United States' stunning success in the round of globalization that swept across the international order at the end of the twentieth century? The author also offers suggestions on which issues the next president should focus on to build an even stronger foundation of U.S. power.

She concludes that the United States has succeeded internationally for reasons deeply rooted in the political culture of the country, namely, tolerance of risk and failure, veneration of individual initiative, encouragement of immigration, fewer constraints on social and economic mobility than most other countries, and—critically—a malleable, absorptive definition of itself.

Kori N. Schake is senior policy adviser to the McCain campaign. She is on leave from being a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Distinguished Professor of International Security Studies at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Too, Too Annoying

Challenged recently to name our least favorite prince of the church, The Scrapbook barely hesitated: That would be Archbishop Desmond Tutu, onetime primate of the Anglican communion in South Africa.

Yes, we know, he's a much-loved avuncular figure, with his googly-eyed glasses, ski-lift nose, and comical accent, always mugging and dancing and laughing uproariously, and turning up everywhere from Zanzibar to Kalamazoo. We long ago lost count of the number of honorary degrees he's collected from American universities, and what would panels and commissions and holiday Aspen seminars be without the presence of Archbishop Tutu? (Did we mention that he won the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize?)

The trouble is that a little Desmond Tutu goes a long, long way. To be sure, the archbishop was a principled opponent of apartheid in South Africa, for which we are pleased to commend him. Less pleasing, however, is his corresponding lack of interest in freedom anywhere else in the world, and his relentless—some might say obsessive—disapproval of American foreign policy and most of our recent presidents (sample: Ronald Reagan was "immoral, evil, and totally un-Christian"). Archbishop Tutu is one of those paradoxical celebrities whose hatred of the United States is matched by his delight in exercising his right to free speech within its borders.

True to form, Tutu recently took to the pages of the *Washington Post* to celebrate the election of Barack Obama ("I want to jump and dance and shout") and, in characteristic fashion, offer some archepiscopal snarls at the man Obama succeeds: "For those of us who have looked to America for inspiration as we struggled for democracy and human rights," he wrote, "these past seven years have been lean ones." After the 9/11 attacks, Tutu continued, "we had our first shock, hearing your president respond not with the statesmanlike demeanor we had come to expect from a U.S. head of state but like a Western gunslinger. Later, it seemed that much of American society was following his lead."

Readers will note that the retired Anglican archbishop has nothing to say about the tyranny of the Taliban in Afghanistan, or the sinister character of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. No, his first shock after 9/11 was George W. Bush and his administration, which has "riled people everywhere. Its bully-boy attitude has sadly polarized our world."

Ordinarily, The Scrapbook wouldn't trouble itself to point out the conceit in Tutu's observation—George Bush, not Osama bin Laden, is the international "bully-boy"—or his boilerplate prose. But we were gratified to observe, a few days later, that one *Post* reader, Edward H. Beck of Burke, Virginia, couldn't contain himself. After enumerating the "effectiveness of several international programs, including the attacks on malaria and HIV/AIDS, carried out by the Bush administration," Mr. Beck drove to the heart of the matter:

> Perhaps Archbishop Tutu should focus on his own back yard, concentrating his enmity and outrage on the current government of South Africa, which is the major supporter of the dictatorial government of Robert Mugabe in neighboring Zimbabwe.

That is, if Archbishop Tutu can stop jumping and dancing and shouting for a moment, and contemplate the moral blindness and obtutusenesss of a celebrated Anglican archbishop. ♦

The Bunker Mentality

Well, it's finished. It took the better part of two decades and slightly more than half a billion dollars, but construction of the Capitol Visitor Center—the huge, underground facility by which tourists will now enter the U.S. Capitol building—has been completed. The center opens to the public on December 2, roughly 18 years after Congress first authorized the project.

Has it been worth the wait? Let's see: Instead of waiting in long, interminable lines for hours on end, exposed to the elements and without easy access to restrooms, those seeking entry into the People's House will wait in long, interminable lines for hours on end, in a climate-controlled underground bunker with movie theaters, gift shops, computers, and—we are not exaggerating here—26 restrooms.

The creation of the Capitol Visitor Center is, in its way, a lesson in American democracy. Congress approved the project in 1991 with a budget of $71 million. When construction began in earnest in 2002, the budget had ballooned to more than $250 million. By 2003, $370 million. Construction was supposed to be finished in December 2005. Three years later, the total cost has mounted to $621 million. Those 26 restrooms must be pretty nice.

There's a larger point, however. Sometimes it seems as though our political class possesses an insatiable desire to burrow underground while inhibiting access to the nation's treasured monuments. For example, the beautiful east steps of the Capitol will be out of reach to most of the public come December 2. It will be difficult for visitors to take in

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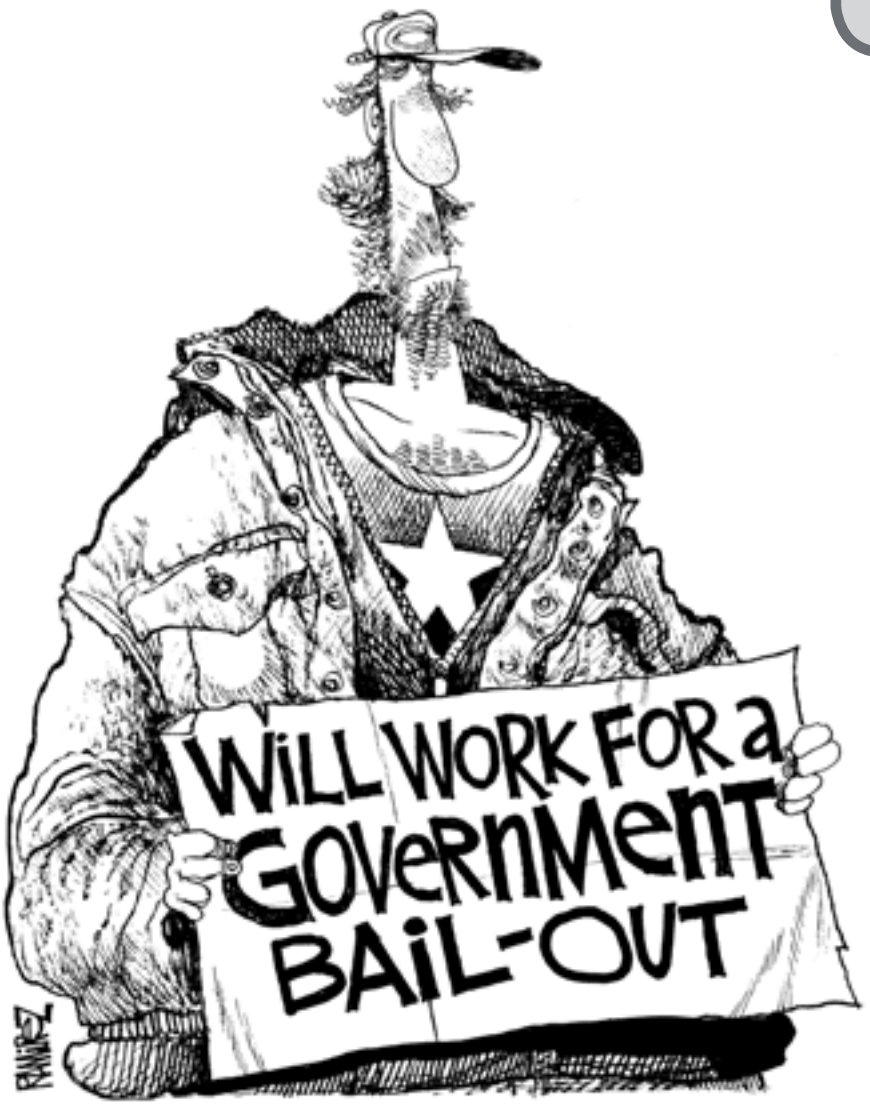

the grandeur of the building up close. Here's how Catesby Leigh put it in an article in these pages some years ago ("Subterranean Blues," January 13, 2003):

> Official Washington has long since ceased to reach for new grandeur in the capital's monumental core. It merely aims at establishing cordons sanitaires against terrorist fanatics, preserving the archaeological integrity of "historic vistas" and "cultural landscapes," avoiding litigation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and commissioning the occasional modernist architectural misadventure. How unworthy of the most prosperous, most powerful nation in human history. How unworthy of the capital of the free world.

We couldn't have put it better. ♦

Fool Me Once . . .

A couple of pranksters have been up to no good, taking credit for the smears of Sarah Palin by pretending to be "Martin Eisenstadt," a "senior fellow" at the "Harding Institute for Freedom and Democracy" who advised John McCain's presidential bid. Turns out Eisenstadt claims to be the "source" of many of the anti-Palin leaks that have bubbled up in recent days. Of course, the whole thing is a hoax—neither Eisenstadt nor the Harding Institute actually exist. Which, funnily enough, didn't stop credulous media outlets from repeating his claims. According to the *New York Times*, among those who fell for the hoax were MSNBC, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *New Republic*.

Wait a minute. The *New Republic*? You've got to be kidding! ♦

Signs of the Times

Spotted on the National Mall: a group of Japanese tourists posing for photographs in front of . . . the Federal Reserve.

Overheard at the intersection of Connecticut and L Streets in DC: a panhandler yelling, "Obama said it was time for change. . . . So give me some change for a hot dog!" ♦

Articles We Didn't Start

'Obama's Good Start" (David Broder, *Washington Post*, November 13). ♦

You Can't Make It Up

'I woke up the next morning [after Election Day] still under the spell of solidarity and love. I decided to make the spell last. I gave away my tickets to a performance of some late Shostakovich quartets, because for once I was not interested in the despair. Instead I spent the day listening to the Ebonys and the Chi-Lites and the Isley Brothers. For lunch I went to Georgia Brown's for fried green tomatoes" (Leon Wieseltier, *New Republic*, November 19). ♦

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Casual

Prizeless

The MacArthur Fellowships were announced some weeks back, and, for the twenty-seventh year in a row, I did not win one. I could have used the half-million dollars, payable at a rate of $100,000 a year, no doubt about that, but I also find I can live without it. At least no one I loathe won; the only person among this year's winners I have heard of is Alex Ross, the excellent young music critic of the *New Yorker*. Even better, none of my friends won it, either.

I haven't had great luck with prizes, which is a gentle way of saying that I haven't won many, and when I have, the satisfaction hasn't been anywhere near as complete as one might imagine.

The first prize I won was, at age 14, for sinking 21 of 25 free throws in a free-throw shooting contest at Green Briar Park in Chicago in 1951. My parents allowed me to nail a basket and backboard to our back porch, and I used to shoot a hundred free throws every afternoon, through all seasons. So I wasn't surprised to win the contest at Green Briar. What did surprise me is that I never received the trophy.

I once won $5,000 for something called the Heartland Prize given by the *Chicago Tribune* for a book of my literary essays, which was gratifying. But when I called my mother to let her know that I had won a prize from the *Tribune*, she replied, "Oh, we get that junk in the mail all the time. I just throw it out."

Early one evening, checking my voice mail, I heard a message from a woman informing me that a book of my short stories had won a prize named after a deceased novelist, and asking me to call back the next day to discuss the details. All that evening I allowed myself to contemplate the amount of the prize: $10,000? $25,000? I went to bed that night thinking myself $50,000, perhaps $100,000, richer. The next morning I learned that the amount of the prize was $250 and that I was expected to travel to Hartford, Connecticut, to receive it and also prepare a talk to give at the lunch where it was to be awarded. I decided to turn down the prize, with the result that the people who awarded it placed me in their permanent enemies pantheon. Another rainy day in the Republic of Letters.

RYAN SNOOK

I've won a few other prizes, been given a medal or two, none of them of sufficient moment to shake me entirely free of doubts about my skill. The problem with almost all prizes and awards in our time is that, even if their sponsors and judges have shown the wisdom to give them to you, they have also, like as not, shown the ignorance to give them to people you know are third-rate. If anyone ever tells you that you are the best at what you do, all you need do to prevent an exaggerated sense of yourself is ask that person who he thinks is second best.

Prizes are one realm where it is better to receive than to give. I have been a judge on a few literary prize panels. The one that gave me most pleasure was that of the Joseph Bennett Award, given by the *Hudson Review*, because we gave the prize to Andrei Sinyavsky, the Russian dissident writer, who deserved it and a great deal more for his physical and intellectual courage in taking on the juggernaut of the Soviet Union.

I was once paid $1,000 to be, for a year, an official nominator for the MacArthur Fellowships, though none of my nominees won a fellowship. Twice I have been asked to serve on the panel of judges for the Pulitzer Prizes and refused both times because the judges' decisions can be overruled by the main Pulitzer Prize committee.

Perhaps—who knows?—I could have done some useful preventive work here. Years ago I heard that Gertrude Himmelfarb, a judge for the Pulitzer Prize for Biography, entered a meeting of her fellow panelists by saying, "I say, boys, we're not going to do the commonplace thing and award the prize this year to X [a standard *bien pensant* who had written a book about a famous American columnist], are we?" And no doubt they would have done, had she not begun the meeting on that aggressively negative note.

The hard fact is that, while prizes are nice and the money that comes along with the prizes even nicer, what most prizes do is stir the hunger for still more prizes. This point was nicely underscored for me one morning when my friend Edward Shils called to say, "Be careful if you speak today with Saul [Bellow]. They've announced the Nobel Prize for Literature this morning, and he's likely to be feeling touchy because he didn't win it for a second time."

Joseph Epstein

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the weekly Standard

Beyond Doom & Gloom

The *Washington Post*'s front page story on the Republican Governors Association meeting last week carried the headline "Republican Governors Meet, Glumly." After the jump, the *Post* bannered its account, "Doom and Gloom at GOP Governors' Meeting."

The gathering didn't seem particularly doomish and gloomish to me. It's true that the governors were realistic about the GOP defeats of 2006 and 2008. As Louisiana's Bobby Jindal said, "They fired us with cause." But this kind of candor from an elected official, in other circumstances, would have warranted a headline like "Candor, Self-Criticism Mark Governors' Meeting" from the *Post*. Those other circumstances, I suppose, would have been that it was a Democratic governors' meeting.

The mood in Miami was hardheaded and forward-looking. The governors, especially in private, were anticipating with some pleasure the prospect of governing freed of the shadow of either a Republican Congress or a Republican White House. They know their efforts in state capitals will help redefine the party nationally.

They're likely to be the stars of the party over the next few years—those who govern successfully and show an ability to get reelected. And Republicans could pick up governorships in states like Virginia in 2009 and Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan in 2010—in all of which they have promising candidates. Pickups in any of these states would make governors even more central to the future of the GOP. And they figure one of their number will likely be the presidential nominee in 2012. All of this made them pretty upbeat.

One pillar of any Republican comeback will surely be successful practical governance at the state level. The Republican revival of the early and mid-1990s—after the across-the-board defeat of 1992, when the first Bush administration was booted out with 38 percent of the vote—was due in part to the examples of effective state governance by Tommy Thompson in Wisconsin and John Engler in Michigan, to say nothing of Rudy Giuliani's efforts in New York City. Then a governor, George W. Bush, retook the White House in 2000.

And, after the previous Democratic takeover of the White House, in 1976, it was a former governor, Ronald Reagan, who led the comeback and took the presidency. So history suggests that statehouses are where a lot of the GOP action will be over the next four years.

But the examples of the late 1970s and the early 1990s suggest something else, too. GOP revivals depend on fresh and bold thinking at the national level. Figures like Jack Kemp redefined Republican economic policy between 1977 and 1980. By 1994, Newt Gingrich and Co. had brought into being a very different Republican party from that of the last days of the first Bush administration. Who are the Kemps and Gingriches today? The field is wide open for the ambitious and the daring.

And, of course, politics isn't just—or even mostly—about ideas. It's also about political leadership. To see Sarah Palin at the Republican Governors Association was to wonder at a natural politician. Among her peers she may be in a class by herself—like Reagan or Barack Obama. Can she rise to the occasion? The media remain desperate to deny that she can, and even to deny her a chance to try.

Thus the *Post* asserted in its article on the Republican governors that "some polling at the end of the campaign suggested Palin was a drag on the ticket." But the one polling question that focused on that most directly would suggest she was not. In the national exit poll, slightly more than half the voters said John McCain's choice of Sarah Palin was not a factor at all or was a minor factor in their vote. McCain lost those voters, 53 to 45 percent. Amazingly, 41 percent said the Palin choice was an important factor in their vote. McCain won those voters 51 to 48 percent. It's also the case that McCain's best stretch was the two weeks in early September after he picked Palin. So it seems unlikely that Palin hurt McCain's chances.

Palin is a phenomenon, and her future is unpredictable. There are plenty of other Republican governors and ex-governors who would be competent and plausible nominees in 2012. The candidate in 2012 is unlikely to be the problem. The question is whether, at the national level, Republicans will have a compelling platform to run on.

After a financial meltdown leading to a severe recession on the Republican watch, and the flailing response of the Bush administration and the incoherence of congressional Republicans, one area that invites urgent new thinking is economic policy. It will be important, over the next four years, to fight to save free-market capitalism from the Obama administration. It will be almost as important—and more interesting—to figure out how to save capitalism from its own worst aspects and most damaging tendencies.

—*William Kristol*

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A Little Something for the GOP?

If only Obama keeps his promises.

BY FRED BARNES

Republicans are doing what they usually do after losing an election, debating the future of the party and perhaps the future of conservatism as well. A struggle between traditional conservatives and a younger group of reformers will be decisive. That's one theory. Another focuses on George W. Bush. What matters is how much of Bush's brand of conservatism is embraced by Republicans after he leaves office. Other schools of thought call for driving neoconservatives or religious conservatives or moderates or McCain-style mavericks to the sidelines. Take your pick. There's a lot to choose from.

It's a nice debate but not terribly relevant. Politics doesn't wait for debates to be resolved. It operates in the short run, which means the next year or two. And starting now, the person with the biggest role in shaping what Republicans and conservatives say and do is President Barack Obama. It may be counterintuitive, but Obama can help Republicans sort things out.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

The more Obama succeeds, the better. The more of his agenda that's enacted, the more an appealing conservative Republican alternative will emerge. Or Obama may take off the table an issue that divides Republicans and hurts the party.

The top priority for Obama is the economic downturn. We know his solution because he's been talking about it for two years. It's to revive the economy from the bottom up, cutting taxes for the middle class, sending checks to the poor, and paying for new spending by raising taxes on the well-off. That includes increasing the tax rate on capital gains and dividends.

Does anyone think this will work? It was tried by the president whom Obama seems to regard as his model, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Rather than jolt the country out of the Depression, FDR prolonged the economic slump right up to World War II. He advanced the interests of organized labor over those of business. Obama would do roughly the same through card check, a minimum wage increase, and protectionism.

It's quite possible Obama may not pursue all of this agenda. He may realize recovery requires, at the very least, less hostility to business and the wealthy than he demonstrated during his campaign. But don't bet on his actually advocating tax cuts, especially of the across-the-board variety, aimed at fostering investment. That would represent a total reversal by Obama of his economic plan and cause a serious rift with his liberal followers.

But it's investment that leads to recovery. And as the recession lingers, pro-business tax cuts are bound to be seen in a fresh new light. They'd suddenly be more popular. And who does the public identify with such tax cuts? Republicans and conservatives, who will gladly remind everyone it was President Reagan's tax cuts that got us out of the 1981-82 recession.

Rejecting tax cuts, Obama may try to spend his way out of the recession. Deficit spending can help for a while. It did for FDR. But when he had to cut back, the economy worsened. Obama would have to cut back, too.

My point is this: Serious, economy-boosting tax cuts have a bright future. That is unless you think the economy will quickly be restored to health without them or that Obama might successfully blame the absence of recovery on Wall Street or business or rich folks, as FDR did. I doubt both those propositions. Obama is likeable and clever, but he's not a magician.

Like clockwork following a Republican defeat, pro-lifers are being blamed, and churchgoing pro-lifers in particular. If only the party would abandon its opposition to abortion, Republicans would win back Senate and House seats in the Northeast and upper Midwest.

This argument ignores the obvious. The Republican party has been officially pro-life since 1980 and has actively sought to limit abortions. The same Republicans who lost their seats on November 4 had won them earlier when the party was every bit as anti-abortion as it is today. Abor-

GARY LOCKE

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tion didn't cause their defeat this year.

Obama can help on abortion, too: by following through on his promise to sign the Freedom of Choice Act. It would enshrine abortion on demand as the law of the land and eliminate all restrictions, including the ban of taxpayer funding for abortions. "The first thing I'd do as president is sign the Freedom of Choice Act," he told Planned Parenthood in 2007.

It's true Obama was overpromising. Signing FOCA won't be his first act as president. At the moment, it's not even a top priority for him or congressional Democrats. But given their large majorities in Congress, Democrats are likely to try to pass FOCA at some point and, if they succeed, Obama surely won't veto it.

Then, the Republican stance on abortion would become the moderate position. Democrats would have enacted, or tried to anyway, the most extreme of pro-abortion positions. By stressing modest limits on abortion favored overwhelmingly by the public, Republicans would have the popular position.

On immigration, Obama could help simply by adopting what he and most Democrats already favor, namely granting the 12 million illegals now in America some sort of permanent legal status. This is also the position of John McCain and President Bush and, for what it's worth, myself.

Many Republicans oppose amnesty legislation. But they'd be better off if it passed. On their own, Republicans have been unable to resolve their deep and politically harmful disagreement on immigration, and there's no compromise on the horizon. Having Obama and Democrats enact a comprehensive immigration bill would resolve the dispute and allow the issue to fade. Republicans could move on.

Should we really expect Obama to provide this much aid and comfort to Republicans? Maybe not. But he's never bucked any of the liberal special interests. In fact, his stated agenda coincides exactly with theirs. All Republicans need is for Obama to keep his promises. ♦

Tennis Shoes and Stolen Toilets

Russia's military 'renaissance.'

BY REUBEN F. JOHNSON

In 1976, when Soviet fighter pilot Viktor Belenko defected to the West in his MiG-25, his U.S. debriefers discovered (along with a trove of Soviet secrets) a military man with a life's accumulation of grievances against the Soviet system. Even at the height of Moscow's power, Belenko told them, the political leadership could not properly provide for its soldiers, sailors, and airmen, who often lived in squalid conditions with almost no means of entertainment or diversion.

The central obsession of the higher-ranking officers at the aerodrome where he was based was inventing ways to steal the highly purified grain alcohol that was used for cooling the MiG-25's avionics and deicing the wings. This often required that several tons of jet fuel be dumped on the ground and a nonexistent flight of the MiG-25 entered into the logbook in order to make it seem as though the alcohol had been consumed in service of the aircraft rather than at some drunken late-night dinner. A senseless waste, as he saw it, to soak hundreds of gallons of fuel into the soil and then later say there was not enough funding for proper base housing or an officers' club.

But the main source of Belenko's alienation was what he described as the Communist party's penchant for "trying to repeal the laws of nature by decree." In the case of his MiG-25, this translated into the impossible task of being ready to take on the latest U.S. military aircraft in an airplane that still used vacuum-tube technology.

One wonders if there is a similar divorce from reality inside the Kremlin today with regard to the Russian armed forces. The past few months have seen a number of grandiose promises for restoring the might and modernity of Moscow's men at arms, but even the most optimistic projections for the Russian economy fall well short of what would be needed to pay for major military initiatives.

In July, a Russian admiral, Vladimir Vysotsky, announced on the Naval Fleet Day holiday that the Russian navy would add six carriers to its force—plus all of the cruisers, destroyers, supply ships, minesweepers, etc., that form a complete carrier battle group. Russia has never had even one proper carrier battle group, has only one aircraft carrier in operation, and has demonstrated that its shipyards are not up to the task even of refitting an old Soviet-era carrier for the Indian Navy. (The shipyards where the current Russian carrier was built during the Soviet period are in Nikolaev, Ukraine, and there are no comparable facilities in Russia.)

More recently, the Russian president, Dmitri Medvedev, made a speech calling for a massive military modernization program and a substantial increase in defense spending. According to his statements, by 2020 Russia will have built substantial numbers of new naval vessels, will have developed a combined air defense and missile defense system with both land and space-based elements, and will have upgraded the nation's conventional forces to a "permanent state of combat readiness."

This is all just so much chest-thumping. The immense sums required to support these lavish promises will not materialize. You can't get there from here, as the old aphorism goes. The

Reuben F. Johnson, an aerospace analyst, writes frequently about the Russian military.

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price of oil (which Russia depends on for a great deal of its state revenues) has dropped to less than half its value from this past summer, the Russian stock market is in free fall, and foreign investment has fled Russia.

President Medvedev has announced an increase in military spending, but total outlays are still far less than the U.S. defense budget, and much of what has been allocated will have to go towards undoing the years of neglect and decay during the Boris Yeltsin presidency.

The performance of the Russian armed forces during the invasion of Georgia in August showed the dismal state of Moscow's military machine. Some Russian soldiers went into battle wearing athletic shoes because there were not enough boots to go around. Russian troops stole everything they could lay hands on—particularly from the Georgian army facilities they overran. Uniforms, beds, U.S.-supplied Humvees, and toilets were even pulled off the walls by Russian forces. "They had everything; the most amazing f—ing beds, amazing f—ing barracks with sealed windows," one Russian soldier was recorded saying in a short mobile phone video that was later broadcast—awestruck like Goldilocks when she stumbled upon Baby Bear's boudoir. Apparently living conditions for soldiers have improved little in the decades since Belenko's defection.

Russian forces were able to overcome Georgian forces because of sheer numbers, but in air operations the Russians had their proverbial head handed to them. A total of 12 Russian aircraft were lost to Georgian air defense units, including one Tupolev Tu-22M Backfire bomber. By the time hostilities ceased Russian pilots were being offered lavish bonus payments if they were willing to fly missions over Georgia, and still some of them turned the offers down, preferring to stay on the ground where it was safe.

The loss of the Tu-22M is symptomatic of the deep and pervasive ills of Russia's military machine. There were no operational pilots with enough hours to fly the mission, so instructor pilots had to be press-ganged into service—only two of whom were able to eject safely. The fact that the aircraft—a medium-range strategic bomber that was originally designed to carry nuclear weapons—was misused for a reconnaissance mission is another source of embarrassment.

A colleague of mine was impolitic enough to point all of this out at a conference in London, only to learn later that one of the attendees in the audience was the Russian air attaché, who later declared himself to be offended. More often than not, this is the standard Russian response to any honest assessment of its military. It is always easier to shoot the messenger than criticize those who should be getting a good working-over for failing to do their jobs properly.

Military offices of the port of Poti, Georgia, after looting by Russian forces August 16

NEWSCOM

At the top of the list of Russian failures should be the intelligence agencies. Like their counterparts at the CIA and so many other spy services around the world, Russian intelligence officers have lived by the axiom that "information is not worth anything unless it has been stolen."

Almost all the data on purchases made by the Georgian air defense forces and the radar networking modernization contracts that had been carried out by Aerotechnica in Kiev and other Ukrainian firms was available in the Russian-language press, on the Internet, and from other open sources, but no one at GRU (the Russian military intelligence service) seemed to be paying any attention. The former commander of the Russian Air Force, General Anatoly Kornukov, blasted the current military leadership, telling the *Interfax* news agency in Moscow that "they sent the Tu-22 crew to their deaths thinking that the Georgian air defense would mount no resistance."

More recently, Medvedev announced that the Russian Navy would conduct maneuvers off the coast of Venezuela in conjunction with the armed forces of Moscow's good ally and compañero Hugo Chávez in order to show his determination to carry out this military renaissance. But it is not an activity that is sustainable or has anything other than the symbolic value of annoying the United States. It's also an enormous expenditure at a time when the basic needs for equipment, clothing, housing, and training of the men in uniform are not being met.

Such failures led to 20 Russian sailors being killed last week. A Freon-based fire extinguishing system on a nuclear submarine accidentally activated, and there were not enough breathing apparatuses on board for all personnel—a basic piece of equipment for which there is no excuse for a shortage. A former Black Sea Fleet commander, Vladimir Komoyedov, told the Russian RIA-Novosti news service that this accident was the result of "the greatest lack of professionalism and negligence."

All signs suggest that the waste and neglect that made Belenko so disdainful of the political commissars were never dealt with. So, be on the lookout for more armed men in tennis shoes carrying stolen toilets in carjacked Humvees the next time Russia decides to make mischief beyond its borders. And don't be surprised if the average Russian serviceman continues to risk being needlessly sent to an early grave. ♦

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Biden: The Book

A glimpse into the future.

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

The election of Barack Obama to the presidency of the United States of America makes all things possible. Really, it does. Not only have the seas stopped rising, but the laws of the space-time continuum have been indefinitely suspended. And so, through the miracle of time travel, THE WEEKLY STANDARD *recently obtained Vice President-elect Joseph Biden's future memoirs, entitled simply* Biden: The Book. *Herewith, some excerpts.*

Chapter CLXVI: On the Trail

. . . and I said, "Bless your heart, Joy, your eyes look great too, I think we had the same surgeon. No, really, you look 20, no 30, and I really mean this, *30* years younger—which reminds me, just as an aside, when I was 20 I wasn't sure whether or not I was going to play linebacker for the Blue Hens. That was the name of my college ball team, the University of Delaware—that's in Delaware, by the way, where I live—the University of Delaware Blue Hens. Anyway, I wasn't sure if I was going to play linebacker. You see folks, my girlfriend at the time, whose name I forget but I do remember she was just fantastic looking—and I'm serious about this, she was just *fantastic*, I'm talking great body here, sweet face, the whole enchilada, as we say in Scranton, where I'm from, Scranton—that's in Pennsylvania—anyway, folks, she went to school out of state and I wanted to spend a lot of time visiting her. And this was before cell phones and during a period when communicating in a long-term relationship could really be difficult. It could *really be difficult*, and I mean that. I am *serious* about that, *difficult*, and it wasn't like I was Franklin Roosevelt when the stock market crashed and could go on television and calm things down. Which is what he did. He calmed things down. Let me say that again: *Calm*. No, when I was an undergrad and was dating this absolute babe—can I say that on network TV? When I was an undergrad, well, and this was a long time ago, Elisabeth, this was before your time. You probably don't even remember. Eisenhower was in his third term and Secretary of State Ernest Borgnine had just authorized the Bay of Pigs invasion, so it was nothing like things are today, when you can—what's that? The show's almost over? Oh. Well, I'm sorry to hear that. I am absolutely sorry to hear that. It's been great talking to you guys. It really has—and I mean that. I am serious about that. It's been *great*. Whoopi: You look beautiful. I'm serious, darlin', just beautiful. Fantastic. And Barbara, thank you for not making me cry, as we discussed before the show. It could really screw things up—but you know what I'm talking about! You know what I'm saying! What a gal—No, I am sorry . . . you are *a woman*. You are *a woman*. Bless your heart. You know, actually, this reminds me of the other day when I was in Home Depot, where I spend a lot of time—"

Unfortunately I couldn't finish my story because they turned the camera off and the studio audience threatened to sue if they weren't let out. It's a great story, though, just absolutely great. And I mean that. It's such a good story. It's so good I really couldn't leave it out of the book, so you can find it in appendix number 10, chapter 3, section 5, lines 15 through 84. You won't want to miss it. Trust me on that. Anyway—and you should really look up that story—those were some of my favorite campaign moments.

Chapter CCLXVI: Election Night

. . . but Michelle said she wanted to watch the returns on MSNBC so that's what we did. We didn't have to watch too long, though, before the nets called the election. The room burst into applause. We were all smiles. The girls were adorable. Just precious. Absolutely precious. We had to get ready for the trip to Grant Park but I wanted to share this moment with Barack. We had a big job to do together, and it was important for me to let him know that I would be with him every step of the way.

Barack had moved to the window and was looking out at the Chicago skyline. From what I could tell he seemed happy but also serious and reflective. That was Barack—always so serious. During the campaign that summer I would sometimes ask him, "Why so serious?" which was a line from a movie I really enjoyed that year, *The Dark Knight*, about Spiderman and his fight against Lex Luthor. Great movie—you should check it out. Anyway, Barack was standing pensively by the window and I could tell he was caught up in the moment.

I went to him. I said, "Baraka: You just won the election. You are going to be the first African-American president, who is clean, articulate. I want to be the first to congratulate you. And I want to be the first to ask you: How does it feel?"

"Well, Joe, to be honest, I'm not sure—"

"Let me stop you right there, Bam Bam," I said. "You just won the elec-

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tion. Let me say that again: You just won. *The election*. And the country's in bad shape. It's in *terrible* shape. And we've got to do something about it, buddy. We have absolutely got to do something about it. This is not going to be easy. It's not going to be like when we went to NATO and helped drive Hezbollah out of Lebanon in 2005. Not at all. This is the biggest crisis since Ronald Reagan got on the Internet and told the nation that he was firing the cafeteria workers. That was in 1977. This is 2008."

"Joe, um, that's what I'm trying to—"

"Barbarella—bless your heart, but you're not gettin' me, man. This is 2008. *2008*. And that reminds me. One night I was taking the train home—I take the train home every day, you know, and I mean that, the Amtrak train, God love it—and sat next to George Hamilton. What a fantastic guy. Just an absolutely fantastic guy. And by the way, Barry—the tan is real. I'm serious about that. George Hamilton's tan is *real*. Anyway, we got to talking about constitutional law, which I teach at the University of Delaware, which is a long way from Scranton, Pennsylvania, which is where I'm from. And I said, 'George, you just don't get it. Just because you don't see a right to privacy in the Constitution doesn't mean that it isn't there. It *is* there, George. Because I'm going to let you in on a little secret: *It's written in invisible ink*. Yes, I *am* serious, George. That is not a joke. Might I remind you that I have a law degree. A law *degree*,' is what I said. Can you believe that, Barista? George Hamilton didn't realize the Founding Fathers wrote in invisible ink. Unbelievable. I'm serious about that. Unbelievable. Anyway, there I am on the train home, on the way to meet some credit card executives for dinner, and I was thirsty so I went to the café car for some orange juice. Let me say that again: Orange juice. It's very refreshing. And wouldn't you know it, who's there in the café car but . . ." ♦

Slouching Toward Washington

The lurid foolishness of the Transition.

BY PHILIP TERZIAN

You may have noticed that some presidential Transitions are more equal than others.

Here is my theory: When a Democrat is succeeded by a Republican in the White House, it is seen as a civic regression, the triumph of dirty politics over clean statesmanship (see Willie Horton, the October Surprise, Lee Atwater, etc.). But when a Democrat replaces a Republican, it's a national rebirth, a celebration of renewal and the natural order of things.

An expatriate Briton, now deceased, liked to tell the story of dining one evening in early 1969, on the eve of Richard Nixon's first inaugural, at the Rive Gauche, a fashionable Georgetown restaurant favored by Jackie Kennedy and friends, long since gone. As their meal progressed, he and his companion observed that the place was swiftly filling up with people they didn't know, or even recognize, total strangers. And then it hit them: The *Republicans* had arrived!

Of course, this mixture of alarm and condescension—Tip O'Neill to Ronald Reagan: "You're in the big leagues now" (1981)—is very different from the tone currently surrounding Barack Obama, or the arrival of Bill Clinton—"Bill and Al's Excellent Adventure," the *Washington Post* (1992)—a decade-and-a-half ago. Certainly as far as the media are concerned, a Democrat-to-Republican Transition is an ominous thing, as the black clouds and killer insects descend on the nation's capital; a Republican-to-Democrat Transition, by contrast, is a tribute to life, an Ode to Joy on the Mighty Wurlitzer of political Washington.

Certainly the Obama Transition has made for painful reading in some quarters—the heroic imagery, the weepy essays, the learned predictions and confident visions, the bad music and fawning profiles—but it is not as though we haven't endured all this before. Remember "The Conversation," the lifelong bull session between and among Bill and Hillary Clinton and their far-flung, high-octane friends, all of whom were now hurtling toward the cabinet, or the Supreme Court or, at the very least, a Renaissance Weekend?

In fact, the origins of heroic Transition are earlier still. Jimmy Carter's one-term presidency was so catastrophic that, in retrospect, we tend to forget the circumstances under which he took office in 1976-77. After eight years of Republican rule, featuring the dead weight of the Vietnam war, the oil embargo, and the Watergate scandal, it was, so far as the press was concerned, as if a great menacing army had besieged the body politic since Nixon's election and been thrown back, at long last, into retreat, perhaps forever.

Yet Barack Obama is not the first presidential aspirant to have written a self-aggrandizing memoir (see *Why Not the Best?* by Jimmy Carter) and, as I write, I have before me my cherished edition of *The Miracle of Jimmy Carter* by Howard Norton and Bob Slosser ("Here is Jimmy Carter—man of faith and politics—as seen by two veteran newsmen").

Before the Gerald Ford/Jimmy Carter Transition, the ten-week interval between election and inauguration was a relatively casual affair, featur-

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ing farewell interviews for the outgoing team, extended postelection vacations for the winners, and a steady, reassuring drip-drip-drip of senior appointments.

Carter and his team institutionalized the process. Indeed, it was during this time that the term "transition" gained widespread currency, was frequently capitalized ("he's with Transition"), and occupied extensive office space in downtown Washington. Now it's an industry unto itself, with a federal budget, official czars (John Podesta for Obama), designated jobs ("she's in charge of Transition for HUD"), and even academic parasites, such as Professor Paul C. Light of New York University, whose specialty is Transition.

Like the current awakening, the Carter Transition had cultural, as well as political, significance. I possess a 1977 print, mounted and framed, by an artist named Don Northcutt, of Billy Carter's shabby gas station in Plains, Georgia. I retain it as a talisman of media coverage of incoming presidents. Before he was a hopeless alcoholic and public embarrassment, Billy Carter was seen in the press as a wise fool, the fun-loving flip side of his sober brother Jimmy, whose connection to the common people was celebrated (by CBS's Eric Sevareid, among others) by proximity to Billy and other rustic members of the Carter family.

This was, of course, before the age of the Internet and YouTube, but during the Transition, the world beat a figurative path to Carter's ranch house in Plains, the peanut-processing plant run by Billy, his motorcycling sister Gloria and faith-healing sister Ruth, and the front parlor of his wisecracking mother, Miss Lillian. You could read poetry in celebration of Carter's universality by James Dickey (*Men are not where he is / Exactly now, but they are around him / around him like the strength / Of fields. The solar system floats on / Above him in town-moths*) or accounts of his come-from-nowhere election (see *How Jimmy Won* by Kandy Stroud of *Women's Wear Daily*). Norman Mailer rediscovered the native strength of America in the soil of Plains, and the British journalist Henry Fairlie swooned when Carter casually mentioned Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* in an interview.

Every Republican-to-Democrat Transition has its historic theme—for Clinton it was the apotheosis of the Baby Boom; for Obama, of course, it is race (Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times*: "[O]n Nov. 4, 2008 . . . the American Civil War ended")—and in Carter's case it was the symbolic readmission of the South into the Union. Carter's religion, as well, was a recurrent theme. The president-elect was a Southern Baptist, and for many Americans, this was the first time they had heard of being "born again" or seen an evangelical. Whereas George W. Bush's evangelical Protestantism has been regarded as the creed of a zealot, pushing secular America toward theocracy, media coverage of Carter's "faith," by contrast, was politely curious.

Mississippi-born John Osborne of the *New Republic*, it is true, was briefly obsessed with finding out whether Carter's Baptist credentials involved a literal belief in heaven and hell, but when it was discovered that the Plains Baptist Church, whose most prominent parishioner was Jimmy Carter, was still strictly segregated (no blacks allowed), the reaction was muted—not exactly the response, say, George W. Bush would enjoy under similar circumstances.

How could it be otherwise? For not only was Carter, in Transition, embraced and surrounded by the aforementioned Mailer and Leonard Bernstein and Clay Felker and Susan Stamberg and Shirley MacLaine and Chevy Chase and Dan Aykroyd and Paul Simon and Walter Mondale, but the whole Republican-to-Democratic journey out of the wilderness was consecrated, at opportune moments, by the Reverend Martin Luther King Sr.—Daddy King, as Carter referred to him—who offered blessings on election night, throughout the Transition, and for the heartiest souls, at sunrise before the Lincoln Memorial on Inaugural Morning.

Of course, this is all amusingly quaint three decades later, and during the Carter Transition, nobody mentioned gas lines or Iran or inflation or national malaise or anticipated a Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. During the Clinton/Bush Transition in 2000-01, the phrase "War on Terror" was nowhere heard, or even pronounced. This may seem astonishing in retrospect, but reassuring as well. Especially now, in the middle of the Bush/Obama Transition, when the prose is particularly lurid, and America slouches toward another Bethlehem to be reborn. ♦

ANGEL, GETTY; OBAMAS, NEWSCOM

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Saakashvili Takes Paris

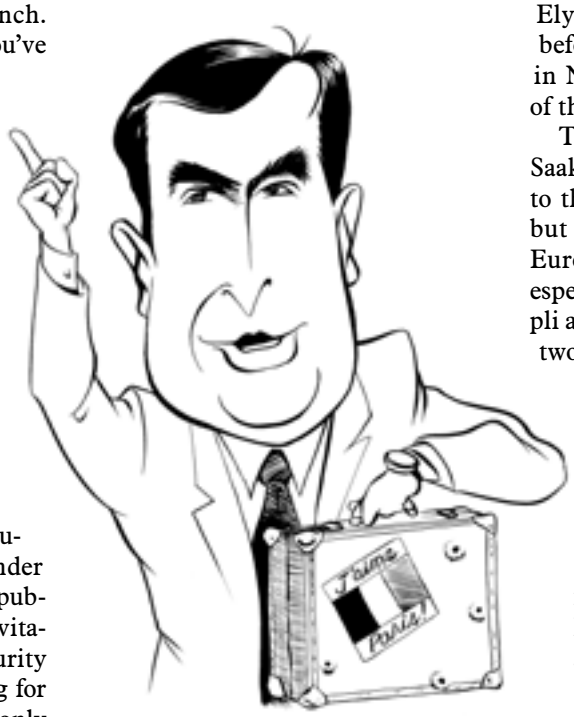
A president and an intello walk into a Left Bank bar . . . BY ANNE-ELISABETH MOUTET

Paris

As an exercise in diplomatic deployment, Mikhail Saakashvili had his French trip planned to near perfection. The French like you more if you've published a book. Check. Even better if the book is originally in French. Check two. And most of all if you've written the book with a card-carrying member of a dynasty of *Nouveaux Philosophes*. Check three.

Thus it was that last Wednesday night, I was yakking away, glass of red in hand in approved Left Bank form, in a crowded Georgian restaurant at the heart of Saint-Germain des Prés, waiting for the president of Georgia and his coauthor Raphaël Glucksmann, who in equally approved form were both late. Piles of *Je vous parle de liberté* (Hachette Littératures, 2008) awaited inscribing under the watchful eye of two Hachette publicists. Nobody was checking invitations. There was no visible security among the modish crowd jostling for spicy canapés inside the bar and only a small police van parked at the corner of rue du Sabot and rue de Rennes down the block. You could not have better telegraphed that Saakashvili—who, as he reminded everyone regularly during his 48-hour-trip, spent a year studying in Strasbourg and there met his future wife—felt at home in France, in the Sixth Arrondissement, and with this crowd.

Saakashvili eventually arrived and gave a short, graceful speech in very good French—more family reunion than formal declaration—particularly saluting his coauthor's father, André Glucksmann, the bowl-cut coiffed author of *The Master Thinkers* and famous as the reuniter of Jean-Paul Sartre and Raymond Aron (over the fate of Vietnamese boat-people in 1979). Glucksmann *père* floated above the proceedings looking like a gaunt but rather healthy mummy. He had read him while a student, Saakashvili explained, marvelling that someone understood the Soviet evil so well. He had not even known if Glucksmann were still alive, much less could he have imagined that he would one day meet the philosopher's son in a muddy park in Kiev during the Orange Revolution, that the two would become friends, and would write a book together. Everyone in the overcrowded room was smiling. After all, one could hardly do better in terms of well-connected *tourisme engagé*. (The French don't play Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon but Six Degrés de Jean-Paul Sartre.)



Mikhail Saakashvili

CHRIS MORRIS

It was a perfect moment, one of the best of Saakashvili's whole tour. He was in France to make the case that Russia had violated the terms of the imperfect cease-fire agreements negotiated by Sarkozy in the name of the European Union on August 12 and September 8, and urge firmness. Saakashvili had even cadged an Elysée invite from Sarko just a day before the EU-Russia summit began in Nice with the French in the seat of the rotating EU presidency.

Throughout his whirlwind tour, Saakashvili was careful to give credit to the Sarkozy-led EU intervention, but it was felt at the time that the Europeans had conceded too much, especially in treating as a fait accompli a Russian military presence in the two seceding Georgian provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Today, Europe is split between the established "engagement with Russia is necessary" line, peddled by Commission president José Manuel Barroso among others, and a resistance front led by the Baltic States, Poland, the Czech Republic, and a somewhat wobbly Gordon Brown, who argue that there should be no resumption of talks on EU-Russia commercial partnership before Russia pulls back the 8,000 soldiers she has on the ground—some as close to Tbilisi as 30 miles. Overall, the engagement line is winning.

Nowhere could this be more strongly felt than on France Inter, the state radio, bright and early Thursday morning as Saakashvili sat in the studio as the guest of the 8 A.M. news program. We French still get our hard news and spin from radio throughout the day, only switching

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to television at night. France Inter is a kind of mass-market NPR, with a relentlessly po-faced liberal line that has only ever pleased, or sought to please, the Quai d'Orsay—as France's foreign ministry is known (the mandarins, not the minister himself, whose ideas are largely seen as irrelevant by his administration).

They were awaiting the Georgian *aventuriste* loaded for bear. Introducing the guest, Bernard Guetta, the morning foreign affairs moderator, reminded us that Saakashvili's calling Europe's possible abandonment of Georgia a "new Munich" had "the support of the American right." Having painted the Neocon cross squarely on Saakashvili's chest, Guetta continued. Georgia had "provoked" Russia, which felt threatened by the suggestion of an "unnecessary and unfeasible extension of NATO" to Georgia and Ukraine, but "thankfully" the United States "had not moved" to defend its ally. Common sense and world stability dictated that Europe and the United States should abstain from "pushing Russia too far" and should instead consider her "offer of cooperation." Nicolas Demorand, France Inter's news editor, then brought out "independent evidence" that Georgia had attacked first. Even the listeners during the phone-in segment were hostile.

Saakashvili, though, gave as good as he got. The OSCE monitor who gave the supposed "independent evidence" has since been fired, he countered. "There wasn't a single Georgian soldier on Russian soil at any time. It was our towns which were bombed, our territory which was invaded, our population which was pushed out or killed by the thousands, even after the EU agreement was signed." A town called Akhalgory was even renamed Leningory: "This in the 21st century." His hosts were dismissive and urged him to reconsider. Joining NATO was a pipedream. "America's support for Georgia weakens and will weaken even more under President Obama." In vain did Saakashvili quote the president-elect's words from the debates, or note Senator Biden's trip to Georgia during the summer war. "Don't you feel how the wind is changing in Washington?" he was admonished.

The rest of the day, save for his 40-minute meeting with Sarkozy, Saakashvili spent giving print interviews, taping more television segments, and, finally, joining Raphaël Glucksmann on *Le Grand Journal*, a one-hour early evening news program on Canal+, France's premier pay-TV channel.

This could have gone for or against Saakashvili. Glucksmann's presence and the duo's practiced, if slightly smug, allusions to their youth, clinched it. The *Le Monde*-quoting Saakashvili (with one more reference to meeting his wife in Strasbourg) was anointed as cool by both the studio audience and the show's regulars. These had decided to use the occasion to bash Sarkozy, always a well-received exercise. ("He campaigned saying that Putin had Chechen blood on his hands, and now they're best buddies! All he answered last summer when Putin said he wanted to have you 'strung up by the balls' was 'You can't do that, do you want to end up like George Bush?'")

Saakashvili smiled at the show's famous political puppets, at the generously décolletaged weather girl, and even during the short video segment showing him coming out of the Elysée meeting earlier in the afternoon and looking a little forlorn on the palace steps when Sarkozy turns away after shaking his hand. The Georgian president demonstrated the required sense of distance accepted as proper manners in the postmodern political discourse practiced by countries where the memories of foreign invasion has faded away.

Throughout his French tour, Saakashvili gave his rather impressively sophisticated all and could only hope that it had advanced the cause of his beleaguered country on the European stage. ♦

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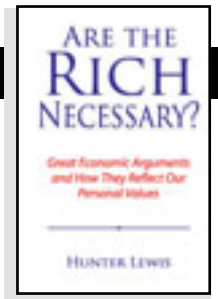

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Worldwide Hate Speech Laws?

Muslims and Christians together.

BY NINA SHEA

Two international meetings to promote interfaith harmony were held in the last two weeks, one in New York and one in Rome. The former, called by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia under the auspices of the United Nations, drew some 20 heads of state to discuss a "Culture of Peace." The latter brought together Muslim and Catholic scholars at the Vatican in the latest session of the dialogue called A Common Word. Both gatherings underscored the gulf between us. At both, all parties spoke for peace and tolerance, but they often meant different things.

As President Bush made clear in his remarks at the U.N. meeting, tolerance is understood in the West as respect for religious freedom. For the Muslim leaders in New York, tolerance means respect for religion itself, particularly Islam. As the astute Turkish political observer Ziya Meral pointed out, if Muslim leaders really wanted tolerance for different religious viewpoints, they would be holding similar discussions within their own societies. But no such discussions are going on.

Especially since 9/11, Islam has been publicly scrutinized, criticized, and sometimes ridiculed in the West to an extent never seen (or permitted) in Muslim lands. Many Muslims feel deeply offended by this, as well as troubled by the violent responses the criticism has sometimes drawn from Muslims—riots, death threats, even murders. Their leaders' solution is to try to halt the cycle by demanding an end to criticism of Islam, even in private speech.

Nina Shea is director of the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom.

For the past decade, the Saudi-based Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) has pushed the U.N. to adopt a universal ban on defaming Islam. This measure would aim to curb the freedom not only of Danish cartoonists but also of scholars, writers, dissidents, religious reformers, human rights activists, and anyone at all anywhere in the world who criticizes Islam. This is already the effect of the domestic laws against apostasy and blasphemy that exist in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, and other states of the Islamic Conference.

Inside Saudi Arabia, there is, of course, a complete absence of religious freedom. All churches are banned, and apostates can be put to the sword (though in practice they more often suffer long prison terms). So the Saudi king's initiative might be seen in the West merely as a brazen public relations ploy. From the OIC perspective, however, the Saudi quest for religious understanding is more purposeful. The king, as the defender of the faith, has come to strike a deal with the West: Suppress criticism of Islam and you will be spared retaliatory violence.

King Abdullah is building momentum for a new U.N.-decreed protection of religions from defamation or criticism, and he wants Western support. This is not inconceivable. Already Canada, the Netherlands, France, and Italy, without real debate, have taken tentative steps to deploy defamation, hate-speech, and even long-dormant blasphemy laws.

A Common Word is a more nuanced, sophisticated effort and holds greater promise of leading to peaceful coexistence, if only in the very long run. It too was initiated by Muslim leaders stirred by perceived criticisms of Islam, specifically Pope Benedict's 2006 Regensburg speech.

At last week's session, each side was represented by 29 religious leaders and scholars. The Vatican's team included converts from Islam and bishops from Muslim states where Christians are persecuted. One participant told me, after hearing "horrible stories of suffering and abuse," that he was convinced "the Vatican won't sell out the Catholic minorities for public expediency."

The final document produced by the Rome gathering contains 15 principles, including respect for individual choice in matters of conscience and religion and "the right of individuals and communities to practice their religion in private and in public." It also urged that sacred founding figures and symbols of religions "not be subject to any form of mockery or ridicule."

The sacred texts of each faith were invoked to support the theme of the dialogue, originally proposed by Muslim leaders: love of God, love of neighbor. If open discussion of these texts is permitted in Muslim societies, it may be useful. The pope emphasized that promoting "a deep mutual knowledge cannot be limited to the small circle of the dialogue forum, but rather should gradually be extended to all peoples, so that day after day, in cities and towns, an attitude of mutual respect is developed."

Just how daunting a task this is was demonstrated recently in Morocco, when a magazine inspired by A Common Word was banned for publishing a discussion of commonalities between Christianity and Islam, an approach deemed religiously offensive. The Vatican has not silenced its own critique of Islam, nor will it drop its support for the strategy of seeking common ground in the face of opposition from some Muslim quarters. The next session is scheduled to take place in a Muslim country in two years.

As Pope Benedict commented afterwards, "A long path has been traveled, and there is still a long way to go." A very long way, indeed. ♦

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Why We Call Them *Human* Rights

Ecuador just gave every virus, bacterium, insect, tree & weed constitutional rights. BY WESLEY J. SMITH

Rights, properly understood, are moral entitlements embodied in law to protect all people. They are not earned: Rights come as part of the package of being a member of the human race. This principle was most eloquently enunciated in the Declaration of Independence's assertion that we are all created equal and endowed with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

This doctrine of human exceptionalism has been under assault in recent decades from many quarters. For example, many bioethicists assert that being human alone does not convey moral value, rather an individual must exhibit "relevant" cognitive capacities to claim the rights to life and bodily integrity. Animal rights ideology similarly denies the intrinsic value of being human, claiming that we and animals are moral equals based on our common capacity to feel pain, a concept known as "painience."

These radical agendas have now been overtaken by an extreme environmentalism that seeks to—and this is not a parody—grant equal rights to nature. Yes, *nature*; literally and explicitly. "Nature rights" have just been embodied as the highest law of the land in Ecuador's newly ratified constitution pushed by the country's hard-leftist president, Rafael Correa, an acolyte of Hugo Chávez.

The new Ecuadorian constitution reads:

> Persons and people have the fundamental rights guaranteed in this Constitution and in the international human rights instruments. Nature is subject to those rights given by this Constitution and Law.

What does this co-equal legal status between humans and nature mean? Article 1 states:

> Nature or Pachamama [the Goddess Earth], where life is reproduced and exists, has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and its processes in evolution.

This goes way beyond establishing strict environmental protections as a human duty. It is a self-demotion of humankind to merely one among the billions of life forms on earth—no more worthy of protection than any other aspect of the natural world.

Viruses are part of nature. So, too, are bacteria, insects, trees, weeds, and snails. These and the rest of Ecuador's flora and fauna all now have the constitutional and legally enforceable right to exist, persist, and regenerate their vital cycles.

The potential harm to human welfare seems virtually unlimited. Take, for example, a farmer who wishes to drain a swamp to create more tillable land to better support his family. Now, the swamp has equal rights with the farmer, as do the mosquitoes, snakes, pond scum, rats, spiders, trees, and fish that reside therein.

And since draining the swamp would unquestionably destroy "nature" and prevent it from "existing" and "persisting," one can conceive of the farmer—or miners, loggers, fishermen, and other users and developers of natural resources—being not only prevented from earning his livelihood, but perhaps even charged with *oppressing* nature.

The inspiration for Ecuador's granting of rights to nature was an American extremist environmental group called the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF), which presses to "change the status of ecosystems from being regarded as *property* under the law to being recognized as *rights-bearing entities*." The constitution, moreover, explicitly empowers organizations like CELDF to enforce nature's fundamental rights. Article 1 states:

> Every person, people, community, or nationality, will be able to demand the recognition of rights for nature before the public bodies [i.e., courts, governmental agencies, etc.].

If the Ecuadorian government fails to protect the rights of the swamp (or the trees, the animals on the mineable mountain, the schools of fish, etc.), any radical environmental organization can descend on Ecuador and sue to thwart the desires of the farmer and prevent him from deciding what to do with his own land. The mind simply boggles.

The mainstream media have made no attempt to sound the alarm about the dangers of this agenda. A *New York Times* environmental blogger was bemused by the Ecuadorian constitution, and an editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* found Ecuador's proposal to make nature the moral equal of people "intriguing."

And it is not just in Ecuador that the international left has demonstrated its determination to devalue humankind in law and ethics. Just this year:

¶ The Socialists and Greens in Spain are on the verge of granting the rights to life, liberty, and freedom from torture to great apes and devolve humans into a "community of equals" with chimpanzees and gorillas.

¶ The European Court of Human Rights recently accepted a case out of Austria that appeals a ruling that refused to declare chimpanzees legal persons.

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¶ Switzerland has constitutionally established the intrinsic dignity of individual plants, based on the many similarities they share with us at the molecular and cellular levels.

Some might say that Ecuador is a small country not worth much concern. But the concept of nature possessing rights seems to be spreading. The CELDF—which was only founded in 1995—brags that it is fielding calls from South Africa, Italy, Australia, and Nepal, that last of which is crafting its own leftist constitution.

Others might say that worrying about nature's rights should take a back seat to less abstract concerns such as the financial crisis and the war on terror. But consider this: The central importance of human life is the fundamental insight undergirding Western civilization. This tenet is now under energetic, and increasingly successful, attack. If such antihumanism prevails, we won't have to worry about nature having rights, but about human beings losing them. ♦

Hispanic Panic

Back to square uno para el GOP.

BY DUNCAN CURRIE

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, a Cuban-American Republican from the Miami area, puts it bluntly: "We have a very, very serious problem." He is referring to the GOP's lack of support among Hispanics, which could derail the party's future presidential hopes.

In a September 2007 *Washington Post* column, former Bush speechwriter Michael Gerson noted that "a substantial shift of Hispanic voters toward the Democrats" in five states—Florida, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, and New Mexico—"could make the national political map unwinnable for Republicans." All five of those states went for George W. Bush in 2004, and all but Arizona went for Barack Obama in 2008. Democratic pollster Fernand Amandi of Bendixen & Associates, which specializes in Hispanic public opinion, says that "the Hispanic vote played a crucial role, if not the determinant role" in helping Obama carry Florida, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico.

The numbers in Florida were especially striking. According to the exit polls, Bush won Florida Hispanics by 12 percentage points (56-44) in 2004, while John McCain *lost* Florida Hispanics by 15 percentage points (57-42) in 2008. In other words, between 2004 and 2008, the Hispanic presidential vote in Florida swung by 27 percentage points.

What explains that? Among other things, a decline in the relative strength of the Cuban vote, which remains heavily Republican. An increasingly large share of Florida's Hispanic population is made up of Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Mexicans, Nicaraguans, Colombians, Venezuelans, Argentines, and other non-Cubans. Indeed, according to Bendixen & Associates, non-Cubans now account for a majority of Latino voters in the Sunshine State. (Just 20 years ago, says Amandi, Cubans represented around 90 percent of Florida's Hispanic voters.) It appears that Obama also did noticeably better among Florida Cubans than John Kerry did four years ago, thanks to the younger generation of Cuban Americans, though McCain still received a huge majority of the Cuban vote.

What about Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico? In each of these states, Latinos made up a significantly bigger portion of the electorate in 2008 than they did in 2004. The Pew Hispanic Center reports that the increase was 5 percentage points in Colorado, 5 percentage points in Nevada, and 9 percentage points in New Mexico. In 2008, Latinos accounted for 13 percent of the electorate in Colorado, 15 percent in Nevada, and 41 percent in New Mexico.

According to the exit polls, Obama ran 16 percentage points ahead of Kerry among Nevada Hispanics and 13 percentage points ahead of Kerry among New Mexico Hispanics. In Colorado, Obama actually ran 7 percentage points *behind* Kerry among Hispanics, but he still won 61 percent of the Latino vote and ran 8 percentage points ahead of Kerry among white voters.

Even in McCain's home state of Arizona, Obama won Hispanics by 15 percentage points (56-41). In Texas, Obama won Hispanics by 28 percentage points (63-35). James Gimpel, an immigration expert at the University of Maryland, predicts that Arizona and even Texas will soon become "blue" states thanks to their large and rapidly growing Hispanic populations. (In 2008, Hispanics were 16 percent of the electorate in Arizona and 20 percent of the electorate in Texas.)

Just a few years ago, it seemed as if Latinos might be opening up to the GOP. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, the partisan affiliation gap among Latinos shrank from 33 percentage points in 1999 to 21 percentage points in 2006. Yet in late 2007, Pew reported that the gap had swelled to 34 percentage points.

What happened? Many blame the debate over comprehensive immigration reform, which produced fierce legislative showdowns in 2006 and 2007. "It was the *tone* of the debate," says Diaz-Balart. "The tone of some Republicans was offensive to the vast majority of Hispanics." He believes this "had a devastating effect" on the party's standing with Latino voters.

Duncan Currie is managing editor of The American.

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"The immigration debate was catastrophically divisive for Republicans," says a GOP Senate staffer (who is Hispanic). He fears that a replay of the 2006 and 2007 immigration spats would "fracture" the GOP and worsen its image among Hispanics.

But immigration is hardly the only factor driving Latinos away from Republicans. Gimpel observes that Hispanic immigrants tend to settle in cities and urban areas that are heavily Democratic. ("Party building is territorial.") He also makes a broader point: As long as the steady inflow of Hispanics to the United States consists predominantly of low-income, low-education immigrants, the GOP will have a difficult time making serious gains among Hispanic voters. As Latinos climb the economic ladder, they are more likely to support Republicans. "But that takes a while," says Gimpel.

The Census Bureau estimates that Hispanics were responsible for about half of America's population growth between 2000 and 2006. During that period, the Hispanic population grew by roughly 24.3 percent, while the total U.S. population grew by only 6.1 percent. In 2007, U.S. Hispanics "had a median age of 27.6, compared with the population as a whole at 36.6. Almost 34 percent of the Hispanic population was younger than 18, compared with 25 percent of the total population." The Census Bureau has projected that Hispanics' share of the total population will grow from 15.5 percent in 2010 to 24.4 percent in 2050.

Of course, demographic forecasts are often unreliable, and there is no guarantee that Hispanic population growth will continue at its current pace. As economists Gordon Hanson and Craig McIntosh of the University of California, San Diego, have written,

> population growth in Mexico has decreased dramatically. Indeed, the 1970 to 2000 decline in fertility in Mexico is one of the fastest ever recorded. Will slowing population growth contribute to slower increases in emigration rates in the future? Absent network effects (and holding labor demand constant), the answer would appear to be yes.

For "network effects," think reunification of extended families—a process that means growth here "may continue to accelerate for some time, even as population growth in the two countries continues to converge."

Hispanics are now fueling population growth in unlikely places, such as Iowa. "In some parts of Iowa, where the white population is shrinking, Hispanics are supplying all the growth," the *Muscatine Journal* reported in August, noting that Hispanic women have a higher fertility rate and that "young white Iowans are moving out of the state right when they're about ready to start families."

The U.S. Latino community is quite heterogeneous, and it would be misleading to portray "the Hispanic vote" as a monolith. In his recent book on immigration, British journalist and former World Trade Organization adviser Philippe Legrain stressed that "successive generations are blending in with the rest of U.S. society." According to data cited by Legrain, "whereas only 8 percent of foreign-born Latinos marry non-Latinos, 32 percent of second generation and 57 percent of third-generation Latinos marry outside their ethnic group."

Indeed, intermarriage is making "Hispanic" a slippery label. Former Florida governor Jeb Bush, for example, is married to a Mexican-American woman. Should their three children be counted as Hispanics?

Over time, as Latinos become more assimilated and see their incomes rise, they may look more favorably on the Republicans. But the constant influx of low-skilled Hispanic immigrants benefits the Democrats, says Gimpel, which means the GOP is fighting an uphill battle. And the self-inflicted wounds of the immigration debate have not yet healed. Until they do, Diaz-Balart says the Republicans "are really in bad shape." ♦

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China's Gruesome Organ Harvest

The whole world isn't watching. Why not?

By Ethan Gutmann

Bangkok

The jeepney driver sizes us up the minute we climb in. My research assistant is a healthy, young Israeli dude, so I must be the one with the money. He addresses his broken English to me: "Girl?"

No. No girls. Take us to the . . .

"Ladyboy? Kickboxer?"

No. No ladyboy, no kickboxer, thanks. I may be a paunchy, sweaty, middle-aged white guy, but I'm here to—well, actually, I *am* on my way to meet a Chinese woman in a back alley. She *is* going to tell me intimate stories of humiliation, torture, and abuse. And the truly shameful part is that after 50 or so interviews with refugees from Chinese labor camps, I won't even be listening that closely.

I'm in Bangkok because practitioners of Falun Gong, the Buddhist revival movement outlawed by Beijing, tend to head south when they escape from China. Those without passports make their way through Burma on motorcycles and back roads. Some have been questioned by U.N. case workers, but few have been interviewed by the press, even though, emerging from Chinese labor camps, they are eager, even desperate, to tell their stories. With the back-alley Chinese woman, I intend to direct my questions away from what she'll want to talk about—persecution and spirituality—to something she will barely remember, a seemingly innocuous part of her experience: a needle jab, some poking around the abdomen, an X-ray, a urine sample—medical tests consistent with assessment of prisoners for organ harvesting.

My line of inquiry began in a Montreal community center over a year ago, listening to a heavy-set middle-aged Chinese man named Wang Xiaohua, a soft-spoken ordinary guy except for the purple discoloration that extends down his forehead.

Ethan Gutmann, an adjunct fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, wishes to thank the Earhart Foundation and the Wallenberg family of Sweden for research support.

He recalled a scene: About 20 male Falun Gong practitioners were standing before the empty winter fields, flanked by two armed escorts. Instead of leading them out to dig up rocks and spread fertilizer, the police had rounded them up for some sort of excursion. It almost felt like a holiday. Wang had never seen most of the prisoners' faces before. Here in Yunnan Forced Labor Camp No. 2, Falun Gong detainees were carefully kept to a minority in each cell so that the hardened criminals could work them over.

Practitioners of Falun Gong were forbidden to communicate openly. Yet as the guards motioned for them to begin walking, Wang felt the group fall into step like a gentle migrating herd. He looked down at the red earth, streaked with straw and human waste, to the barren mountains on the horizon. Whatever lay ahead, Wang knew they were not afraid.

After 20 minutes, he saw a large gleaming structure in the distance—maybe it was a hospital, Wang thought. The summer of 2001 had been brutal in South China. After he'd worked for months in the burning sun, Wang's shaved head had become deeply infected. Perhaps it was getting a little better. Or perhaps he had just become used to it; lately he only noticed the warm, rancid stench of his rotting scalp when he woke up.

Wang broke the silence, asking one of the police guards if that was the camp hospital ahead. The guard responded evenly: "You know, we care so much about you. So we are taking you to get a physical. Look how well the party treats you. Normally, this kind of thing never happens in a labor camp."

Inside the facility, the practitioners lined up and, one by one, had a large blood sample drawn. Then a urine sample, electrocardiogram, abdominal X-ray, and eye exam. When Wang pointed to his head, the doctor mumbled something about it being normal and motioned for the next patient. Walking back to camp, the prisoners felt relieved, even a tad cocky, about the whole thing. In spite of all the torture they had endured and the brutal conditions, even the government would be forced to see that practitioners of Falun Gong were healthy.

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The author with former prisoners in Bangkok. Most of these women told about being tortured. The woman at left, Jing Tian, was given suspicious blood tests and identified Yida as a likely site of organ harvesting.

PHOTOS: ETHAN GUTMANN

They never did learn the results of any of those medical tests, Wang says, a little smile suddenly breaking through. He can't help it. He survived.

I spoke with Wang in 2007, just one out of over 100 interviews for a book on the clash between Falun Gong and the Chinese state. Wang's story is not new. Two prominent Canadian human rights attorneys, David Kilgour and David Matas, outlined his case and many others in their "Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China," published and posted on the web in 2006.

By interviewing Wang, I was tipping my hat to the extensive research already done by others. I was not expecting to see Wang's pattern repeated as my interviews progressed, nor did I expect to find that organ harvesting had spread beyond Falun Gong. I was wrong.

Falun Gong became wildly popular in China during the late 1990s. For various reasons—perhaps because the membership of this movement was larger than that of the Chinese Communist party (and intersected with it), or because the legacy of Tiananmen was unresolved, or because 70 million people suddenly seemed to be looking for a way into heaven (other than money)—the party decided to eliminate it. In 1998, the party quietly canceled the business licenses of people who practiced Falun Gong. In 1999 came mass arrests, seizure of assets, and torture. Then, starting in 2000, as the movement responded by becoming more openly activist, demonstrating at Tiananmen and hijacking television signals on the mainland, the death toll started to climb, reaching approximately 3,000 confirmed deaths by torture, execution, and neglect by 2005.

At any given time, 100,000 Falun Gong practitioners were said to be somewhere in the Chinese penal system. Like most numbers coming out of China, these were crude estimates, further rendered unreliable by the chatter of claim and counterclaim. But one point is beyond dispute: The repression of Falun Gong spun out of control. Arrests, sentencing, and whatever took place in the detention centers, psychiatric institutions, and labor camps were not following any established legal proce-

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dure or restraint. As an act of passive resistance, or simply to avoid trouble for their families, many Falun Gong began withholding their names from the police, identifying themselves simply as "practitioner" or "Dafa disciple." When asked for their home province, they would say "the universe." For these, the nameless ones, whose families had no way of tracing them or agitating on their behalf, there may be no records at all.

Guangdong prison as seen on Google Earth. The arrow shows where Yu Xinhui saw buses waiting to take prisoners away—he believed for organ harvesting.

In early 2006, the first charges of large-scale harvesting—surgical removal of organs while the prisoners were still alive, though of course the procedure killed them—of Falun Gong emerged from Northeast China. The charges set off a quiet storm in the human rights community. Yet the charge was not far-fetched.

Harry Wu, a Chinese dissident who established the Laogai Foundation, had already produced reams of evidence that the state, after executing criminals formally sentenced to death, was selling their kidneys, livers, corneas, and other body parts to Chinese and foreigners, anyone who could pay the price. The practice started in the mid-1980s. By the mid-1990s, with the use of anti-tissue-rejection drugs pioneered by China, the business had progressed. Mobile organ-harvesting vans run by the armed services were routinely parked just outside the killing grounds to ensure that the military hospitals got first pick. This wasn't top secret. I spoke with a former Chinese police officer, a simple man from the countryside, who said that, as a favor to a condemned man's friend, he had popped open the back of such a van and unzipped the body bag. The corpse's chest had been picked clean.

Taiwanese doctors who arranged for patients to receive transplants on the mainland claim that there was no oversight of the system, no central Chinese database of organs and medical histories of donors, no red tape to diminish medical profits. So the real question was, at $62,000 for a fresh kidney, why would Chinese hospitals waste *any* body they could get their hands on?

Yet what initially drew most fire from skeptics was the claim that organs were being harvested from people before they died. For all the Falun Gong theatrics, this claim was not so outlandish either. Any medical expert knows that a recipient is far less likely to reject a live organ; and any transplant dealer will confirm that buyers will pay more for one. Until recently, high volume Chinese transplant centers openly advertised the use of live donors on their websites.

It helps that brain death is not legally recognized in China; only when the heart stops beating is the patient actually considered dead. That means doctors can shoot a prisoner in the head, as it were, surgically, then remove the organs before the heart stops beating. Or they can administer anesthesia, remove the organs, and when the operation is nearing completion introduce a heart-stopping drug—the latest method. Either way, the prisoner has been executed, and harvesting is just fun along the way. In fact, according to doctors I have spoken to recently, all well versed in current mainland practices, live-organ harvesting of death-row prisoners in the course of execution is routine.

The real problem was that the charges came from Falun Gong—always the unplanned child of the dissident community. Unlike the Tiananmen student leaders and other Chinese prisoners of conscience who had settled into Western exile, Falun Gong marched to a distinctly Chinese drum. With its roots in a spiritual tradition from the Chinese heartland, Falun Gong would never have built a version of the Statue of Liberty and paraded it around for CNN. Indeed, to Western observers, Falun Gong public relations carried some of the uncouthness of Communist party culture: a perception that practitioners tended to exaggerate, to create torture tableaux straight out of a Cultural Revolution opera, to spout slogans rather than facts.

For various reasons, some valid, some shameful, the credibility of persecuted refugees has often been doubted in the West. In 1939, a British Foreign Office official, politely speaking for the majority, described the Jews as not, perhaps, entirely reliable witnesses. During the Great Leap Forward, emaciated refugees from the mainland poured into Hong Kong, yammering about deserted villages and cannibalism. Sober Western journalists ignored these accounts as subjective and biased.

The yammering of a spiritual revivalist apparently counts for even less than the testimony of a peasant or a

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Jew. Thus, when Falun Gong unveiled a doctor's wife who claimed that her husband, a surgeon, had removed thousands of corneas from practitioners in a Northeastern Chinese hospital named Sujiatun, the charge met with guarded skepticism from the dissident community and almost complete silence from the Western press (with the exception of this magazine and *National Review*).

As Falun Gong committees kicked into full investigative mode, the Canadian lawyers Kilgour and Matas compiled the accumulating evidence in their report. It included transcripts of recorded phone calls in which Chinese doctors confirmed that their organ donors were young, healthy, and practiced Falun Gong; written testimony from the mainland of practitioners' experiences in detention; an explosion in organ transplant activity coinciding with a rise in the Falun Gong incarceration rate, with international customers waiting as little as a week for a tissue match (in most countries, patients waited over a year). Finally, Kilgour and Matas compared the execution rate in China (essentially constant, according to Amnesty International) and the number of transplants. It left a discrepancy of 41,500 unexplained cases over a five-year span.

This report has never been refuted point by point, yet the vast majority of human rights activists have kept their distance. Since Falun Gong's claims were suspect, their allies' assertions were suspect. Transplant doctors who claimed to have Falun Gong organ donors in the basement? They were just saying what potential organ recipients wanted to hear. Written testimony from practitioners? They'd been prepped by activists. The rise in organ transplant activity? Maybe just better reporting. The discrepancy between executions and transplants? As a respected human rights scholar asked me, why did Kilgour and Matas use Amnesty International's estimate of the number of executions in China to suggest the execution rate had stayed constant for 10 years? Even Amnesty acknowledges their numbers might represent a gross understatement. There might be no discrepancy at all.

Finally, why had no real witness, a doctor or nurse who had actually operated on Falun Gong practitioners, come forward? Without such proof (although such an individual's credibility can always be savaged, even with supporting documents), human rights advocates argued there was no reason to take the story seriously. There certainly were not sufficient grounds for President Bush to mention organ harvesting in his human rights speech on the eve of the Beijing Olympics.

The critics had hinted at legitimate points of discussion. But so had the Chinese government: Fresh off the confession in 2005 that organs were being harvested from ordinary death-row prisoners, and after issuing their predictable denials of harvesting organs from Falun Gong, Beijing suddenly passed a law in July 2006 forbidding the sale of organs without the consent of the donor.

Three things happened. The organ supply tightened. Prices doubled. And transplants continued. So unless there has been a dramatic cultural shift since 2004, when a Chinese report found that only 1.5 percent of transplanted kidneys were donated by relatives, the organs being sold

Yu Xinhui, who spent five years in Guangdong prison, says organ harvesting 'was common knowledge' there. 'Even before you die, your organs are already reserved.'

must still come from somewhere. Let's assume it's prisoners—that's what Taiwanese doctors think—and theorize that the new law was a signal: Get your consent forms and stop harvesting from Falun Gong. For now.

And the critics had one thing exactly right: Precision is an illusion. No taped conversation with a mainland doctor is unimpeachable. All witnesses from China have mixed motives, always. And, again, no numbers from China, even the one in the last paragraph, can be considered definitive.

Indeed, the entire investigation must be understood to be still at an early, even primitive, stage. We do not really know the scale of what is happening yet. Think of 1820, when a handful of doctors, scientists, and amateur fossil hunters were trying to make sense of scattered suggestive evidence and a disjointed pile of bones. Twenty-two years would pass before an English paleontologist so much as

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coined the term "dinosaur"—"terrible lizard"—and the modern study of these extinct creatures got seriously under way. Those of us researching the harvesting of organs from involuntary donors in China are like the early dinosaur hunters. We don't work in close consultation with each other. We are still waiting for even one doctor who has harvested organs from living prisoners of conscience to emerge from the mainland. Until that happens, it is true, we don't even have dinosaur bones. But we do have tracks. Here are some that I've found.

Qu Yangyao, an articulate Chinese professional, holds three master's degrees. She is also the earliest refugee to describe an "organs only" medical examination. Qu escaped to Sydney last year. While a prisoner in China in June 2000, she refused to "transform"—to sign a statement rejecting Falun Gong—and was eventually transferred to a labor camp. Qu's health was fairly good, though she had lost some weight from hunger strikes. Given Qu's status and education, there were reasons to keep her healthy. The Chinese police wanted to avoid deaths in custody—less paperwork, fewer questions. At least, so Qu assumed.

Qu was 35 years old when the police escorted her and two other practitioners into a hospital. Qu distinctly remembers the drawing of a large volume of blood, then a chest X-ray, and probing. "I wasn't sure what it was about. They just touch you in different places . . . abdomen, liver." She doesn't remember giving a urine sample at that time, but the doctor did shine a light in her eyes, examining her corneas.

Did the doctor then ask her to trace the movement of his light with her eyes, or check her peripheral vision? No. He just checked her corneas, skipping any test involving brain function. And that was it: no hammer on the knee, no feeling for lymph nodes, no examination of ears or mouth or genitals—the doctor checked her retail organs and nothing else.

I may have felt a silent chill run up my spine at points in our interview, but Qu, like many educated subjects, seemed initially unaware of the potential implications of what she was telling me. Many prisoners preserve a kind of "it can't happen here" sensibility. "I'm too important to be wiped out" is the survivor's mantra. In the majority of the interviews presented here, my subjects, though aware of the organ harvesting issue, had no clear idea of my line of questioning or the "right" answers.

Falun Gong practitioners are forbidden to lie. That doesn't mean they never do. In the course of my interviews I've heard a few distortions. Not because people have been "prepped," but because they've suffered trauma. Deliberate distortions, though, are exceedingly rare. The best way to guard against false testimony is to rely on extended sit-down interviews.

In all, I interviewed 15 Falun Gong refugees from labor camps or extended detention who had experienced something inexplicable in a medical setting. My research assistant, Leeshai Lemish, interviewed Dai Ying in Norway, bringing our total to 16. If that number seems low, consider the difficulty of survival and escape. Even so, just over half of the subjects can be ruled out as serious candidates for organ harvesting: too old, too physically damaged from hard labor, or too emaciated from hunger strikes. Some were simply too shaky in their recall of specific procedures to be much help to us. Some were the subjects of drug tests. Some received seemingly normal, comprehensive physicals, though even such people sometimes offered valuable clues.

For example, Lin Jie, a woman in her early 60s living in Sydney, reported that in May 2001, while she was incarcerated in the Chongqing Yong Chaun Women's Jail, over 100 Falun Gong women were examined "all over the body, very detailed. And they asked about our medical history." Fine. Yet Lin found herself wondering why "one police per practitioner" escorted the women through the physical, as if they were dangerous criminals. Practitioners of Falun Gong are many things—intense, moralistic, single-minded—but they are strictly nonviolent. Clearly someone in the Chinese security system was nervous.

Or take Jing Tian, a female refugee in her 40s, now in Bangkok. In March 2002, the Shenyang Detention Center gave a comprehensive physical to all the practitioners. Jing watched the procedure carefully and saw nothing unusual. Then, in September, the authorities started expensive blood tests (these would cost about $300 per subject in the West). Jing observed that they were drawing enough blood to fill up eight test tubes per practitioner, enough for advanced diagnostics or tissue matching. Jia Xiarong, a middle-aged female prisoner who came from a family of well-connected officials, told Jing outright: "They are doing this because some aging official needs an organ."

But Jing sensed something else in the air that fall, something more substantial: Prisoners were arriving in the middle of the night and disappearing before dawn. There were transports to "hospital civil defense structures" with names like Sujiatun and Yida, and practitioners with no names, only numbers.

It was not a good time to be an angry young practitioner, according to a refugee in her 30s recently arrived in Hong Kong. She has family in China, so let's call her Jiansheng Chen. Back in 2002, Chen noticed another pattern. When the blood tests started, she said, "before signing a statement [renouncing Falun Gong] the prac-

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titioners were all given physicals. After they signed, they wouldn't get a physical again."

Chen was a "nontransformable"—with an edge. Not only did she refuse to renounce Falun Gong, but she shouted down anyone who did. Chen was getting medication three times a day (possibly sedatives), so drug-testing can't be ruled out. Yet as her resistance dragged on, the police said: "If you don't transform, we'll send you away. The path you have chosen is the path of death." For eight days efforts were made to persuade Chen to renounce Falun Gong or gain her submission by torture. Suddenly the guards ordered her to write a suicide note. Chen mocked them: "I'm not dead. So why should I sign a death certificate?"

The director brought in a group of military police doctors wearing white uniforms, male and female. The labor camp police were "very frightened" at this point, according to Chen. They kept repeating: "If you still won't transform, what waits for you is a path to death."

Chen was blindfolded. Then she heard a familiar policewoman's voice asking the doctors to leave for a minute. When they were alone, the policewoman began pleading with her: "Chen, your life is going to be taken away. I'm not kidding you. We've been here together all this time, we've made at least some sort of connection by now. I can't bear to see this—a living person in front of my eyes about to be wiped out."

Chen stayed silent. She didn't trust the policewoman—why should she? In the last eight days, she had been hung from the ceiling. She had been burned with electric batons. She had drunk her own urine. So, the latest nice-nice trick was unconvincing. Then Chen noticed something dripping on her hand—the policewoman's tears. Chen allowed that she would *think* about transforming. "That's all I need," the policewoman said. After a protracted argument with the doctors, the police left.

Practitioners like to talk about altering the behavior of police and security personnel through the power of their own belief. It's a favorite trope. Just as a prisoner of war is duty bound to attempt escape, a Falun Gong practitioner is required by his moral code to try to save sentient beings. In this spiritual calculus, the policeman who uses torture destroys himself, not the practitioner. If the practitioner can alter the policeman's behavior, by moral example or supernatural means, there's some natural pride, even if the practitioner still gets tortured.

But practitioners vary. Chen did not tell her story with composure. She screamed it out cathartically, in a single note of abrasive, consuming fury. It's also relevant that Chen is not just stubborn, impossible, and a little mad, but young, attractive, and charismatic. She gave her account of the policewoman without braggadocio, only abject, shrieking shame at having finally signed a transformation statement. The policewoman had met a fellow warrior—her tears are plausible.

Dai Ying is a 50-year-old female refugee living in Sweden. As 2003 began, 180 Falun Gong were tested in Sanshui labor camp. The usual our-party-especially-cares-for-you speech was followed by X-rays, the drawing of massive blood samples, cardiograms, urine tests, and then probes: "They had us lie on [our] stomachs and examined our kidneys. They tapped on them and ask[ed] us if that hurt."

Incarcerated from 2002 to 2005, Fang Siyi was examined repeatedly. She remembers hearing four other prisoners selected for exams being referred to by staff as 'Eastern Lightning'—Christians.

And that was it—organs only, hold the corneas—a fact that Dai, almost blind from torture at the time, remembers vividly. Corneas are relatively small-ticket items, worth perhaps $30,000 each. By 2003, Chinese doctors had mastered the liver transplant, worth about $115,000 from a foreign customer.

To meet the demand, a new source of supply was

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needed. Fang Siyi is a 40-year-old female refugee in Bangkok. Incarcerated from 2002 to 2005, Fang was examined repeatedly and then, in 2003, picked out for special testing in the Jilin detention center in Northeast China.

Fang had never seen the doctors before: "Upon arriving here, they changed into labor camp uniforms. But what struck me is that they seemed to be military doctors." Twelve prisoners had been selected. Fang estimates that eight were Falun Gong. How did she know? "For Falun Gong, they called them, Little Faluns." Who were the other four? "[The staff] would say, Here comes another one of those Eastern Lightning."

Eastern Lightning are Christians—fringy, out-there Chinese Christians to us, incurable, nontransformable deviants to the party. Jing, too, remembers Eastern Lightning being given blood tests in 2002, but Fang remembers the Jilin exam as far more focused: "The additional examinations would just be blood tests, electrocardiograms, and X-rays, nothing else. It was Falun Gong practitioners and Christians."

Compassion fatigue seeping in? I'll keep this short.

"Masanjia Confidential" has family in China, so prudence dictates mentioning only that she's about 40 and is in Bangkok. Her experience takes us into what I call the "Late Harvest Era" of 2005, when many practitioners seem to have been whisked off to wham-bam organ exams and then promptly disappeared. When I asked her if anyone in Masanjia Labor Camp actually received medical treatment, she responded without missing a beat: "If people came in on a stretcher, they were given cursory treatment. In good health, a comprehensive exam. . . . They needed healthy people, young people. If you were an auntie in your 60s or 70s they wouldn't pay attention to you."

Were there military personnel present at the physicals? "They didn't need them. Masanjia is very close to Sujiatun [hospital]—a pretty quick drive. If they needed someone they could just tie them up and send them over. . . . Usually they were taken at night."

In 2007, Yu Xinhui, free after five years in Guangdong prison, signed himself, his wife, and their infant son up for a foreign trip with a Chinese tour group. Upon arriving in Bangkok, they fled to the YMCA and applied for U.N. refugee status. Yu is in his 30s, the picture of robust health. While in prison, he was tested repeatedly, finally graduating to an "organs-only" exam under military supervision in 2005.

Yu makes a good show of indulging my questions, but to him it was never a big mystery: "There was common knowledge of organ harvesting in the prison. . . . Even before you die, your organs are already reserved." Criminal prisoners would taunt the practitioners: "If you don't do what we say we'll torture you to death and sell your organs." That sounds like a stupid game, but everyone knew there was a real list: Prisoners and practitioners alike would be taken away on an annual schedule. Yu knew which month the buses would arrive and where they would park in the courtyard. He gave me a tour of the exact spot on Google Earth.

When Falun Gong's claims about organ harvesting surfaced in March 2006, Yu still languished in prison, incommunicado. So it's all the more interesting that he vividly remembers a large, panicky deportation of prisoners (perhaps 400 people, including practitioners) in May 2006. "It was terrifying," Yu says. "Even I was terrified." The timing is consistent: With all the bad publicity, mainland doctors were hinting at a close-of-business sale on organs at exactly this time.

By 2007, the consensus was that the Chinese government had shut down Falun Gong harvesting to avoid any embarrassing new disclosures before the Olympics. So my final case must be viewed as borderline, a comprehensive medical exam followed by . . . well, judge for yourself.

Liu Guifu is a 48-year-old woman recently arrived in Bangkok. She got a soup-to-nuts physical—really a series of them—in Beijing Women's Labor Camp in 2007. She was also diagnosed as schizophrenic and possibly given drugs.

But she remembers her exams pretty well. She was given three urine tests in a single month. She was told to drink fluids and refrain from urinating until she got to the hospital. Was this testing for diabetes or drugs? It can't be ruled out. But neither can kidney-function assessment. And three major blood samples were drawn in the same month, at a cost of about $1,000. Was the labor camp concerned about Liu's health? Or the health of a particular organ? Perhaps an organ that was being tissue-matched with a high-ranking cadre or a rich foreign customer?

The critical fact is that Liu was both a member of a nontransformed Falun Gong brigade with a history of being used for organs and was considered mentally ill. She was useless, the closest approximation we have to a nameless practitioner, one of the ones who never gave their names or provinces to the authorities and so lost their meager social protections.

There were certainly hundreds, perhaps thousands, of practitioners identified by numbers only. I've heard that number two hundred and something was a talented young female artist with nice skin, but I don't really know. None of them made it out of China alive.

None of them likely will. Tibetan sources estimate that 5,000 protesters disappeared in this year's crackdown. Many have been sent to Qinghai, a potential center of organ harvesting. But that's speculative. Both the Taiwan-

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ese doctors who investigate organ harvesting and those who arrange transplants for their Taiwanese patients agree on one point: The closing ceremony of the Olympics made it once again open season for harvesting.

Some in the human rights community will read that last assertion with skepticism. Until there is countervailing evidence, however, I'll bet on bargain-basement prices for organs in China. I confess, I feel a touch of burnout myself at this thought. It's an occupational hazard.

It's why I told that one-night-in-Bangkok joke to get you to read beyond the first paragraph. Yet what's really laughable is the foot-dragging, formalistic, faintly embarrassed response of so many to the murder of prisoners of conscience for the purpose of harvesting their organs. That's an evil crime.

Washington faces its own imperatives: The riptide of Chinese financial power is strong. Those in government do not want to hear about Falun Gong and genocide at a time of financial crisis, with China holding large numbers of U.S. bonds. So the story continues to founder under the lead weight of American political and journalistic apathy. At least the Europeans have given it some air. They can afford to. They aren't the leader of the free world.

It will be argued—quietly, of course—that America has no point of easy leverage, no ability to undo what has been done, no silver bullet that can change the Chinese regime. Perhaps not, but we could ban Americans from getting organ transplants in China. We could boycott Chinese medical conferences. Sever medical ties. Embargo surgical equipment. And refuse to hold any diplomatic summits until the Chinese put in place an explicit, comprehensive database of every organ donor in China.

We may have to live with the Chinese Communist party, for now. For that matter, we can console ourselves that there are no bones, for now. There will be none until the party falls and the Chinese people begin to sift through the graves and ashes.

We are all allowed a touch of compassion fatigue—it's understandable. But make no mistake: There *are* terrible lizards. And now that the Olympic Games are over, and the cameras have turned away, they roam the earth again.♦

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Rising Stars at GOP Governors' Meeting

They're a surprisingly upbeat group

By Stephen F. Hayes

Miami

Sarah Palin was not scheduled to arrive for another 30 minutes, but by 9 A.M. last Thursday more than a hundred journalists from around the world had gathered in a large ballroom at the InterContinental Hotel for a chance to ask her a question. Palin had been at the hotel the previous day, to tape interviews with Wolf Blitzer and Larry King. Everywhere she went in Miami a media caravan followed close behind, hoping for an impromptu question-and-answer session—something the McCain campaign leadership had not permitted her during the campaign.

Sarah Palin

Bobby Jindal

Jon Huntsman

Bob Riley

For political reporters, Palin remains something of an enigma. The soap opera of the McCain campaign and the prospect of a future in national politics combine to make her one of the most interesting political stories going. So almost without exception those of us gathered for Palin's first postelection press conference were eager to hear her.

The exception, seated to my right, was a young producer for "W Radio," a Spanish-language network that covers news in 22 Latin American countries and the United States. She explained that had she gotten rolled by her male colleague into covering this, the second-most important event in the Miami area that day, so that he could cover "the show" at the Fontainebleau Hotel. When I asked what that event was, she looked stunned. "Are you kidding me?" she asked in a thick Spanish accent that accentuated the question. "Victoria's Secret. You do not have someone covering the show?" Utter disbelief. I told her it was an oversight I would be sure to correct next year. She seemed relieved.

Moments later, 13 male governors walked briskly into the room, up a handful of stairs, and onto a beautifully constructed stage paid for by the organization hosting the meeting, the Republican Governors Association. Along with them was Palin, sporting a black miniskirt and a black leather blazer. As she walked in, dozens of cameras began to click in unison. The men took their places on stage—to the right and left of the podium. Opposite them stood risers with nearly 30 television cameras ready to capture every last word of the coming exchange, and in front of the risers were rows of print journalists poised to take copious notes.

Governor Rick Perry of Texas, the current RGA chairman, took the podium and introduced Palin by noting that she represents the best of Republican leadership at the state level. Finally, Palin stood at the microphone and opened the floor to questions.

And just under five minutes later, it was all over. Four questions. ("Are you f—ing kidding me?" two reporters in my row said at almost precisely the same moment.) There was general agreement among the journalists gathered to hear her that Palin did not "make news," by which reporters mean she did not make any major mistakes or say anything controversial.

Stephen F. Hayes, a senior writer at The Weekly Standard, *is the author of* Cheney: The Untold Story of America's Most Powerful and Controversial Vice President *(HarperCollins).*

PALIN, JINDAL, RILEY: NEWSCOM

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With the press conference concluded, the male governors, none of whom had been asked a question, were cleared from the stage like props. On my way to the grand ballroom for Palin's big speech, I looked for a restroom. I ran into nine of the governors as they emerged from some back hallway to hit the head. I joined them.

The bathroom was crowded. The first governors claimed the spots—two at urinals and two in the stalls, doors open. Perry was just behind me, along with several other governors. He did not wait quietly.

"Oh, Hoeven! I'm not shaking your hand when you're done," he shouted to North Dakota governor John Hoeven who was wrapping up in a stall. "This is not the Minneapolis Airport!"

Someone else noticed Alabama governor Bob Riley in the other stall. "Wow, Riley really has a wide stance!"

Perhaps more interesting than what they said, was what they did not. Although several would later grouse privately about their role at the press conference, there was no Palin bashing in the john.

In the main ballroom, Palin began her speech with some self-deprecating humor—noting how much has happened since she saw her colleagues last spring. "I had a baby. I did some traveling. I very briefly expanded my wardrobe. I made a few speeches. I met a few VIPs, including those who really impact society, like Tina Fey." Her speech included a look back at the McCain campaign and some very gracious words for the man who had chosen her as his running mate. She spent some time making the case, as many did over the course of the three-day meeting, that Republican governors would be the center of power in the GOP for the foreseeable future.

After the speech, I chatted with her for a few minutes in a side meeting room. She offered me a chair and then a soda before we got started. As she twisted the cap off her Diet Coke, she apologized for being late—even though she wasn't—and said she just didn't feel like she could have run out of the room right after giving her speech without talking to some of the "folks" in attendance. On the table in front of her she had several business cards and a CD that she'd collected.

I started by asking her about the question of the day—whether the federal government should bail out the Big Three automakers. She'd gotten the same question one day earlier from Wolf Blitzer and her meandering response to him was so vague that it suggested she knew very little about the issue. She noted that she was "listening closely to the debate" and that "there is a lot of information that even you and I certainly aren't privy to." If it had come two weeks earlier, it almost certainly would have spawned a new round of attacks from her critics.

I was interested to see if she'd studied up on the issue in the 24 hours since she was first asked about it, so I put the same question to her. She said she was:

> not real enthused about looking at this next package if this entails additional dollars—beyond the $700 billion—and if it at all would suggest in this new proposal that these would be grants, not loans. And because Paulson just came out yesterday and again this morning kind of shifting gears on Americans in terms of what had just been proposed in the first bailout, it kind of lends some distrust to the solution here that's being proposed. So we all need more information on what exactly is it this time—the second bailout package that would evidently be very beneficial for manufacturing, for the auto industry. If that's important we have to consider it. But no more surprises. I think the surprises make the electorate distrust elected officials and their ability to appoint people who are to be looking out for the public's interest.

Better.

Sources close to Palin say she will continue to study national issues—including foreign policy and national security—so that she will be in a better position to talk about them in the future. Palin said she is open to campaigning for Republicans during the next election cycle, but noted that her other responsibilities will require her to be selective.

'Keep in mind that I've never been an obsessive partisan, believing that just because you have an "R" by your name that you're going to be the best candidate.'

—Sarah Palin, governor of Alaska

"My family and my job in Alaska certainly come first," she said.

> And keep in mind, too, that I've never been an obsessive partisan, believing that just because you have an "R" by your name that you're going to be the best candidate. . . . It would have to be someone I truly believed in and could recognize their ability to usher in those things that I think are so important to help lead this nation and perhaps help them lead their state.

Can you think of a Democrat you'd be willing to campaign for?

> Well, in Alaska, I've appointed Democrats to positions where they're helping lead the state and they're doing their job. I like to try to help them see the light and to help them understand why the Republican planks in our platform I believe are best for governing. At this point, no, I can't think of anyone.

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She pauses to think. "No."

In her speech, Palin went out of her way to praise George W. Bush for keeping the country safe for the past seven years. And yet, days earlier, she pointed to Bush administration incompetence as one of the reasons the McCain-Palin ticket lost on November 4. Much of the rhetoric at the RGA meeting echoed that view. In private conversations with Republicans here, many of them pointed to Bush as the reason the party finds itself so unpopular with voters.

'I don't think recognizing that there's a right to health care means you favor a single-payer system.'

—Bobby Jindal, governor of Louisiana

With polls showing Bush's approval rating at a record low, I asked Palin how she would respond to a pollster who wanted to know whether she approved of the job Bush is doing as president.

"I would say there are some of the shots that he has called that I agree with, and there are areas where I disagree with him," Palin responded.

> And that's just a general comment—I could give it with anybody and everybody. But what is foremost the president's responsibility? To defend our country, protect the homeland. And he has succeeded there. And that's why doing a shout-out to him even here—we do, in the political arena go to great lengths to avoid stating the obvious. The obvious is, he has succeeded there. We have not been attacked again. That has been where his concentration has been and for that I do thank him.

I pressed her a bit to answer the question. "If you got a call in the governor's mansion from a pollster, and they said: 'Governor Palin, do you approve of the job the president's doing, yes or no.' Do you know how you'd answer that?"

Said Palin: "I'd have a long answer like that and say talk to me specifically about the policies, implementation of some of his ideals, and I'll be able to answer that."

Alongside all of the public discussion about the future of the Republican party and the reporting on the new Obama administration, we will probably spend a good chunk of the next two months evaluating Bush's presidency. So I put that same question to two other Republican governors at the RGA meeting, Bobby Jindal of Louisiana and Jon Huntsman of Utah.

The impressive young Jindal is already mentioned as a presidential possibility for 2012. The son of immigrants from India, he went to Brown and earned a Rhodes Scholarship. At 25, he was named secretary of Louisiana's Department of Health and Hospitals, an agency rife with corruption. He turned it around. Jindal served two terms in Congress before his election as governor last year.

He is, as his résumé suggests, a policy wonk. He rattles off numbers and statistics with the greatest of ease, and reporters who take the time to check them out—as I did when working on a profile of him last year—discover that he is almost always right. When I spoke to Jindal before his speech at the RGA, he adapted the language of the left to argue for market-based solutions to the country's health care problems. Jindal says Americans have a "right" to health care, but adds: "I don't think recognizing that there's a right to health care means you favor a single-payer system."

Although he is a very effective communicator, Jindal's rapid-fire speaking style risks coming off like a used-car-salesman pitching on behalf of ideas. *What is it going to take to get you into this new medical savings account?* But that's nit-picking. There is a reason he's mentioned as a presidential possibility at just 37.

Jindal did not respond directly when I asked how he would respond to a pollster asking whether he approved of Bush's performance.

"Look, the history books will certainly judge the president," he said. Jindal pointed to Bush's education policies as one area of disagreement and he's been an outspoken critic of Bush on spending. At the same time, like Palin he pointed to Bush's "tremendous work behind the scenes to keep America safe after 9/11." He added: "I voted for him twice and don't regret my votes."

Huntsman is as impressive as Jindal, though far more moderate. A veteran of the Reagan White House, Huntsman served as ambassador to Singapore at 31. He worked in both Bush administrations—at the State Department and at Commerce. He speaks fluent Mandarin Chinese. Before running for governor, he was the deputy U.S. trade representative.

When we chatted at the RGA meeting, Huntsman voiced concerns about the direction of his party, saying that Republicans are on the wrong side of "seismic demographic shifts that are occurring right under our feet." Huntsman, who has a strong record as a tax-cutter in Utah, argued that Republicans should talk more—and more convincingly—about the environment and issues that appeal to younger voters. He warned against "always trying to remake the world to look just like us."

Huntsman, who comes from a state that John McCain won by 29 points, was less timid than Palin or Jindal when I asked him if he approved of the job George W. Bush is doing as president. He simply said, "No." ♦

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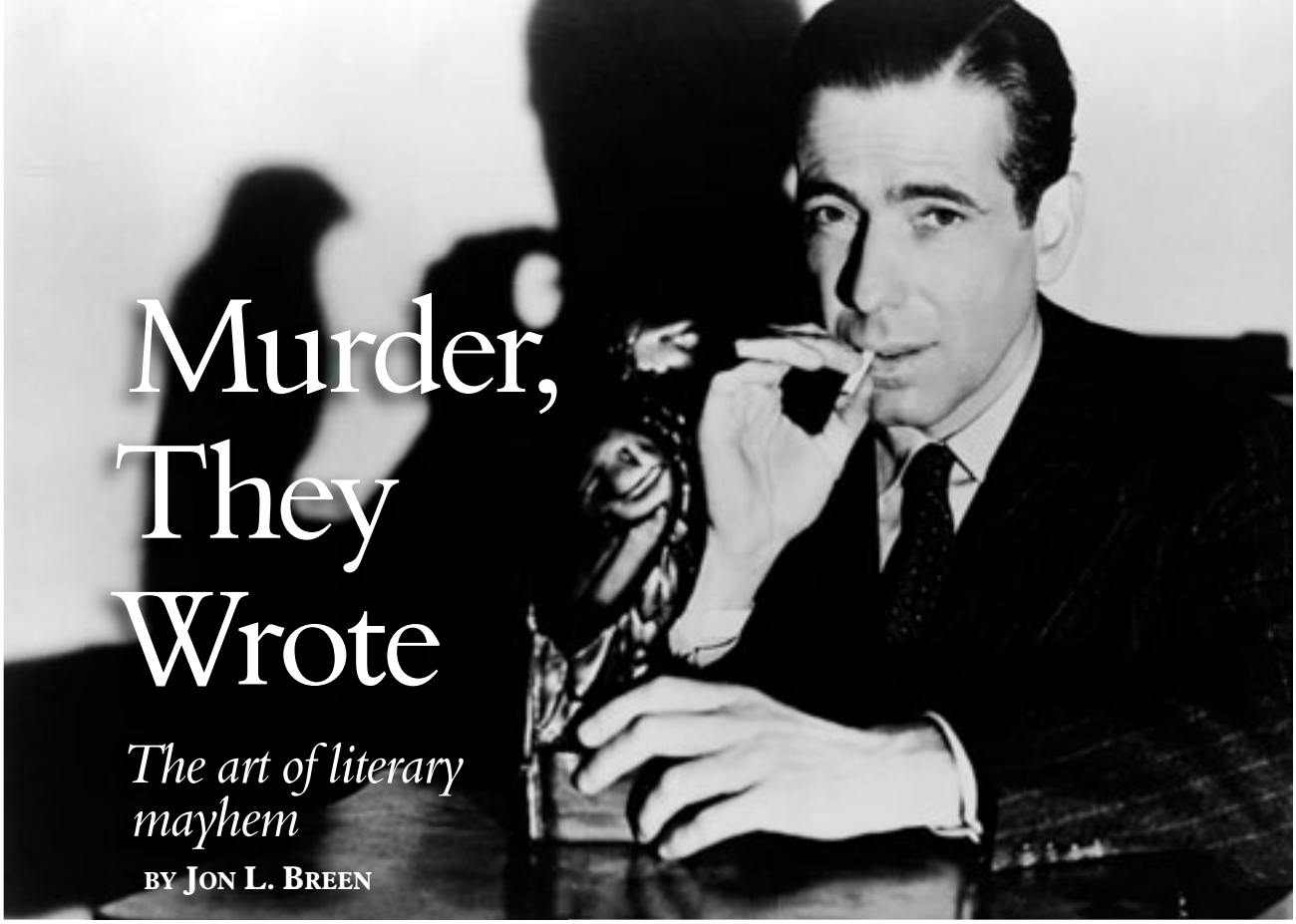

Murder, They Wrote

The art of literary mayhem

BY JON L. BREEN

Humphrey Bogart and 'The Maltese Falcon' (1941)

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Why do we read true crime stories?

Is it a voyeuristic interest in the details of someone else's misfortune? Do we enjoy a reminder that our own lives, mundane and uneventful by comparison, could be much worse? Or perhaps our interest represents something more ennobling: a desire to understand the elements of the criminal justice system (police, courts, prisons), the conditions of society that breed crime, and the psychology of criminal behavior in the hope of making it all better. Most likely we just appreciate nonfiction writing with the high literary value that an excellent new anthology from the Library of America provides.

Editor Harold Schechter was wise to arrange the selections in *True Crime* chronologically by date of publication, allowing the reader to trace the development of attitudes toward crime and styles of true crime writing. The first entry is a spare factual account from William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1651) of the execution of a murderer who came over on the *Mayflower*. The last, concerning a notorious late 20th-century case, was published in 2001. Three brief pieces, one by Benjamin Franklin, represent the 18th century; about 130 pages cover 19th and 20th century writings, comprising over three-quarters of the total page count.

While the element of titillation was always present, the initial goal of American true crime reportage was saving souls. In selections from the 1699 compilation *Pillars of Salt*, Cotton Mather follows short descriptions of murder, piracy, rape, bestiality, and other capital sins with page after page of dialogue between minister and the condemned on their way to the gallows. What initially looks like the dullest possible reading becomes oddly compelling as the subject of the exercise desperately strives for an acceptable level of repentance.

True Crime
An American Anthology
Edited by Harold Schechter
Library of America, 900 pp., $40

An anonymous piece on Jesse Strang, hanged in 1827 New York for the murder of his lover's elderly husband, is the first to resemble a contemporary true-crime article, essentially sober, factual, and detailed. It is drawn from *The Record of Crimes in the United States* (1834), a favorite book of crime buff Nathaniel Hawthorne, who is himself represented by an 1838 notebook entry about a waxworks featuring notorious murderers. An 1836 newspaper article on the Helen Jewett case by James Gordon Bennett pioneers the sensationalized tabloid approach to true crime, with a clear goal of selling newspapers.

Perhaps it should not be surprising that writers of more than a century ago addressed issues that remain controversial today—the death penalty, the insanity plea, the efficacy of the jury system, trying minors as adults—and with the same sorts of arguments. Abraham Lincoln's account of an 1841 murder prosecution, absent a corpse and based on circumstantial evidence, was advanced as a cautionary note on capital punishment. An 1876 piece by Lafcadio Hearn offers a chilling account of a death house and botched hanging. Ambrose Bierce wrote

Jon L. Breen is the author, most recently, of Eye of God.

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in 1868, "We yearn for a law making temporary insanity a capital offense."

In a selection from *Roughing It* (1872) Mark Twain writes:

> When the peremptory challenges were all exhausted, a jury of twelve men was impaneled—a jury who swore they had neither heard, read, talked about nor expressed an opinion concerning a murder which the very cattle in the corrals, the Indians in the sage-brush and the stones in the streets were cognizant of. . . . The jury system puts a ban upon intelligence and honesty, and a premium upon ignorance, stupidity, and perjury.

The anonymous 1875 pamphlet, "Jesse Harding Pomeroy, the Boy Fiend," concludes of the 14-year-old multiple murderer: "The gallows is the proper doom of the wretched boy, who is as fit to roam at large, or be confined in a weak cell as the tiger who has once tasted blood." (In fact, the death sentence was overturned and Pomeroy lived until 1932, spending almost two-thirds of his 60-year prison sentence in solitary confinement.)

Though many classic cases are included, this book is not intended to be an encyclopedia of notorious American crimes. Apart from Twain's description of lawless Virginia City, there's not much Old West action. A section of murder ballads omits the shooting of Jesse James by the "dirty little coward" Robert Ford. Political assassinations are not included, apart from José Martí's 1881 article on the trial of Charles Guiteau, President Garfield's unhinged killer. O.J. Simpson is mentioned only in passing.

Such Hollywood cases as the unsolved murder of director William Desmond Taylor and the rape trials of comedian Fatty Arbuckle are omitted, though the 1958 stabbing of gangster Johnny Stompanato by the daughter of Lana Turner is covered in a 1983 piece by Jay Robert Nash. The Lindbergh kidnapping case is represented only by Edna Ferber's article deploring the chic and trendy crowds at the 1935 trial of German immigrant Bruno Richard Hauptmann.

The 1892 Fall River, Massachusetts, murder of the Bordens is covered in the section of verse, though not by the famous jump-rope rhyme that begins "Lizzie Borden took an ax." Among other cases given a poetical treatment are the drowning murder of Grace Brown by Chester Gillette (the 1906 case on which Theodore Dreiser would base *An American Tragedy*) and the 1930s robbery spree of Bonnie and Clyde—as penned with a surprising literary flair by Bonnie Parker herself.

It's tempting to call the 1920s the peak period of great American crime writing. Librarian Edmund Pearson brought a relaxed and elegant style, exemplary scholarship, and encyclopedic knowledge of criminal history to his essays, approaching each case like a well-read critic discerning innovations and influences in a new work of literature. His 1926 piece "Hell Benders, or The Story of a Wayside Tavern" discusses the history of "wholesale murderers" before zeroing in on an 1870s case in which a series of travelers unfortunate enough to stop for the night at a Kansas tavern were murdered for financial gain.

A chronicler quite different in style but equally impressive in achievement was Damon Runyon. At 67 pages, the compilation of his articles about the 1927 trial of Ruth Snyder and Judd Gray for the murder of Snyder's husband Albert is the longest piece in the book. In an era before television, Runyon provided the kind of novelistic description and detailed scene-setting that might not occur to a journalist of today, even one as gifted as he. Consider the following on one major actor in the drama:

> Gray stepped to the stand with a quick tread, and an almost soldierly bearing, which was most surprising in view of the fact he has looked all folded-up like an old accordion since the trial started. He did not commence straightening up until Friday, when he found Mrs. Snyder nudging him toward that warm chair at Sing Sing. . . . He wore a dark, double-breasted suit of clothes with a white linen collar and a tie that had an almost indecorous stripe. . . . His horn-rimmed spectacles have yellowish lenses, which, added to the jailhouse tan he has acquired, gave him a sickly complexion under the stand lamp by the witness stand with its three lights like a pawnbroker's sign.

Post-twenties highlights are also plentiful: John Bartlow Martin on the Mad Butcher of Kingsbury Run, an unsolved serial killing case in 1930s Cleveland that is as baffling as Jack the Ripper, if not as notorious; A.J. Liebling looking back on the turn-of-the-century competition of New York dailies and the involvement of newspaper writers in real detective work; Zora Neale Hurston on a black-on-white killing in the waning days of Jim Crow; Gay Talese on a minor figure in the Manson case; Jimmy Breslin on Son of Sam.

Books and newspapers are the most common sources; the magazine most frequently represented, with three selections, is the *New Yorker*. Only two pieces come from the specialized true crime magazines that were a popular newsstand genre for most of the 20th century: a semi-fictionalized 1936 narrative by a deputy sheriff "as told to" Jim Thompson, and an account of Richard Speck's killing of eight student nurses in 1966 Chicago by the prolific W.T. Brannon, once known as the "dean of American crime writers." Brannon credits an astonishing number of police officers by name, presumably as an aid to getting their cooperation.

Schechter introduces each article with a note on the author and, where necessary, about the eventual outcome of the case. Besides those already mentioned, contributors include literary giants (Frank Norris, James Thurber, Truman Capote), celebrated journalists (Alexander Woollcott, H.L. Mencken, Dorothy Kilgallen), crime fiction writers (Robert Bloch, James Ellroy), and true-crime specialists (Miriam Allen deFord, Albert Borowitz, Ann Rule).

The final essay, by Dominick Dunne, concerns Lyle and Erik Menendez, the privileged Beverly Hills brothers convicted of the 1989 murder of their parents. Though it has a fascinating story to tell, it is one of the weakest pieces in the book, with a name-dropping celebrity/tabloid sensibility, irrelevant lifestyles-of-the-rich-and-famous details, meandering organization, and cliché-ridden prose full of vague attributions of the "some said" variety.

It's tempting to wonder if Schechter chose it to make a cautionary point about the state of contemporary true crime writing. ♦

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'Exiles' in Exile

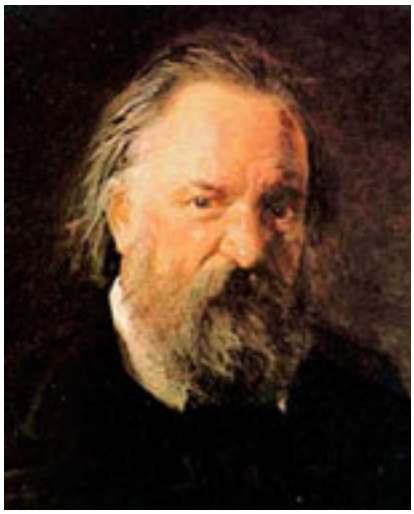
E.H. Carr and the case of the disappearing masterpiece. **BY EDWIN M. YODER JR.**

Russian nationalism is back in the news after a welcome lull, and that offers an opportunity to describe my recent, excited reacquaintance with an early chapter in its checkered history.

It began when I recommended to a friend, a clergyman of historical and literary sensibility, a book I remembered liking very much in my college years: Edward Hallett Carr's *The Romantic Exiles* (1933). I recommended, along with it, a Conrad novel, *Under Western Eyes*, that also evokes the expatriate world of thwarted Russian reformers of the 19th century. I may have said, "These books will help you understand the tragic political obtuseness of the Russians." I soon found myself drawn again to Carr's book, and emerged from a rereading stunned. It is quite simply a masterpiece. When he wrote it, Carr was a young Foreign Office diplomat in his early forties, assigned to the League of Nations in Geneva. He was to become, in due course, an influential journalist and then an eminent historian of the Bolshevik Revolution and fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

But he is undoubtedly better remembered in this country for a later and quite different book, *What Is History?* (1961), a donnish dissection of the way historians work. *What Is History?* enjoyed the rare destiny of becoming a bestseller (30,000 copies sold in the United States, a quarter-million worldwide) and of being enthusiastically attacked by fellow historians all over. Barbara Tuchman, for instance, professed astonishment at Carr's historical agnosticism: She took him to be saying that even the most familiar episodes have no reality apart from what historians write about them, and in that respect resemble the tree crashing silently in a primeval forest because no one hears the sound.

I am not sure that Tuchman grasped the point, and her riposte might have been ignored had she not been at the time the celebrated author of *The Guns of August*, a book about accident and miscalculation in the origins of the First World War.



Alexander Herzen

Guns was said to have influenced John F. Kennedy's cautious response to Nikita Khrushchev's attempt to place Russian ballistic missiles in Cuba, undoubtedly the most dangerous provocation of all the Cold War years. But did she read Carr right? He actually says—it approaches truism—that historians shape our ideas of the past because what they write is conditioned by their origins and experience; and that this conditioning colors what they make of supposed historical facts. He also suggests—another near-truism—that historical events are "overdetermined" in the Freudian sense, born of many tangled causes; and that historians must establish some hierarchy among them.

Tuchman, the gifted amateur, tended to find historical causation rather obvious, even simple. Why, she asks in *The Guns of August*, did Turkey ally itself with the Central Powers in 1914? For the simple reason that a German battle cruiser being pursued by the Royal Navy found refuge at Istanbul!

In *The Romantic Exiles*, Carr shows how a band of expatriate Russian idealists—some of them of the nobility, a few of them very wealthy—intoxicated themselves with Rousseauist romanticism, and acted accordingly. He knew the surviving daughter of their leader, Alexander Herzen, who lived conveniently in Geneva; and he drew artfully on their plentiful letters and diaries and other literary remains to limn their personal quirks and attitudes.

They were determined to escape the oppression they had fled. Was the czarist regime police-ridden, intrusive, harsh, and terrifying? Very well. High on Rousseau and George Sand (they even adopted roles from her novels), they would so free themselves of conventional jealousies that not even their frequent adulteries would impair mutual regard and friendship—not fatally, at least. Whatever one thinks of these colorful exiles, whether one considers them foolish or noble or both, *The Romantic Exiles* is a masterwork, a book literally hard to put down. As Carr's recent biographer Jonathan Haslam writes, it is "quite unlike anything else Carr ever wrote [with] an energy to it and a fluidity that makes it more like a novel." Having reread it with utter fascination after some 50 years, I wanted to know more about the book's afterlife. What might the formidable Professor Carr of 1961 have thought of the younger self who had written so warmly and perceptively about the Herzen circle?

The surprising answer is: *nothing.* In the early pages of *What Is History?* he lists all his works but *The Romantic Exiles*. There, and also in a collection of essays published at about the same time. According to Haslam, he had dismissed his youthful masterpiece as "frivolous."

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PUBLIC DOMAIN

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If so, he was hardly the first writer to mistake his strengths. Arthur Conan Doyle, for instance, was appalled to think that he might be remembered for his Sherlock Holmes stories rather than his "serious" novels, now long forgotten. E.H. Carr similarly staked his reputation on his dry and impersonal *History of Soviet Russia* in 14 volumes. It is already gathering dust, and its resolutely neutral perspective on the crimes, follies, and rivalries of that sour chapter of human history earned Carr little praise and much scorn. His biographer offers few clues to Carr's repudiation of *The Romantic Exiles*. But some evidence may lie in the epilogue. The failure of Herzen's influence—he and his circle were industrious propagandists for democratic reform—meant that, when it finally came some 70 years later, the Russian Revolution would match, even exceed, czarism in repressiveness. By the time Carr wrote his multivolume magnum opus on that revolution, he had apparently surrendered his warm sympathy for the gentler virtues and embraced a dusty, impersonal view of the "historical process" that left small room for amiable eccentricity and idealism.

Yet he had foreseen the cost of the failure: Before Marx, "the cause of revolution . . . had been idealistic and romantic—a matter of intuitive and heroic impulse. Marx made it materialistic and scientific—a matter of deduction and cold reason . . . subordin[ating] human nature and human happiness to the working of a scientific principle."

It is regrettable that Carr did not cling to that vital distinction. But these speculations about the disowning of *The Romantic Exiles* may be unfair, for he never explained it completely. Carr was a formidably complicated student of history, with great brilliance of intellect and style. But his eventual embarrassment by the richly human story he had written as a young man, with a depth and eloquence worthy of the great masters of Russian fiction, is itself a literary tragedy of sorts—a tragedy of art to match the enduring tragedies of Russian politics. ♦

Art Under Siege

Underground culture against kultur in the air.

BY EDWARD SHORT

In September 1938, at the height of the Munich crisis, which would result in Neville Chamberlain's giving Herr Hitler carte blanche to help himself to Czechoslovakia—Churchill put it nicely when he said that "the German dictator, instead of snatching his victuals from the table, has been content to have them served to him course by course"—the assistant keeper of London's National Gallery, Martin Davies, made a tour of country houses to see whether they would be suitable for storing the museum's art collection for the duration of what even then the English knew would be a frightful bombing from the Luftwaffe.

The National Gallery in Wartime
by Suzanne Bosman
National Gallery London, 128 pp., $24.95

After sojourning in each house, Davies made notes, remarking of one visit: "The owner is nice, ruled by his wife, a tartar, anxious to have NG pictures instead of refugees or worse." Of another, "Owner . . . seems obliging in a haughty way." However obliging, most owners did not have what was necessary to store paintings: Their houses lacked the requisite size (doorways had to be of an immense height to accommodate larger paintings), fireproofing, or the proper temperature. Penrhyn Castle, a huge neo-Norman pile built in Wales in the early 19th century, was one of the few exceptions. Davies transported two shipments of paintings to the castle on special trains and stored them in its massive dining room and garage, where the ghosts of the West Indian slaves whose labor paid for the castle must have welcomed them with amusement.

In *The National Gallery in Wartime*, Suzanne Bosman has written a fascinating account of how director Kenneth Clark and his staff arranged for the wartime storage of the museum's contents, first in country houses and then in the capacious repository of a disused quarry in the Welsh mountains. This book is wonderfully illustrated, including photographs of solitary railway vans negotiating the long and winding roads of Wales on their way to the quarry—scenes worthy of the old Ealing comedies in which English pluck always carries the day.

There is certainly an Ealing touch to one of Davies's concerns: "One of our troubles at Penrhyn Castle," he wrote, "is that the owner is celebrating the war by being fairly constantly drunk. He stumbled with a dog into the Dining Room a few days ago; this will not happen again. Yesterday, he smashed up his car, and, I believe, himself a little—so perhaps the problem has solved itself for the moment."

In his autobiography, *Another Part of the Wood* (1974), Clark vividly recalled this tense time:

> By 1938 it did not require Mr. Churchill's eloquence, nor the muddled, hysterical support of the left for Czechoslovakia, to arouse in the minds of ordinary men and women a sense of shame and foreboding. We realized at last that the pandering of successive governments to the peace-loving inclinations of the country in which, for once, materialism and idealism were united, had left us impotent. No one, not even Mr. Churchill, knew exactly how weak we were.

Coincidentally, Chamberlain was a friend of Clark's. He and his wife Jane often dined with Chamberlain at

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Chequers. But Clark had no illusions about Birmingham's most famous son:

> I was educated as an historian, and so have a certain prejudice in favour of those who can think historically. Mr. Chamberlain although he had a fund of information on unimportant matters (he occupied a whole luncheon at Chequers in 1938 by giving Jane the history of every famous gem), had no conception of what Gibbon called "The vicissitudes of fortune, which spares neither man nor the proudest of his works, which buries empires and cities in a common grave." This sweep of historical imagination was one of the supreme gifts of Mr. Churchill.

In times to come, Clark's supreme gift may be seen not as his glorious television series *Civilisation* or his incomparable monograph on Leonardo or his critical work on Piero della Francesca and Rembrandt, but the work he did to keep the National Gallery's collection out of that common grave.

Now that Americans begin to forget their own vulnerability to attack from assailants that can make Hitler's ruffians look like choirboys, it might be a salutary reminder to read of how Clark and his staff protected the Gallery's riches. What strikes the reader most about this undertaking is how tremendously efficient it was. Once the British ascertained that the sites of the country houses where National Gallery paintings were stored—Bangor, Aberystwyth, Caernavon, and Penrhyn—would be within the flight path of German bombers headed for targets in and around the Liverpool docks, they realized that they would have to transfer most of the paintings to a more secure place, and it was then that they moved their treasures to the Manod quarry near Blaenau Ffestiniog in Wales.

One thousand seven hundred feet above sea level, it was accessible only by four miles of mazy, mountainous road. To ensure that there was an opening big enough into the quarry, 5,000 tons of rock had to be blasted away. Moreover, within the quarry, temperature-controlled rooms had to be constructed to house the paintings, narrow-gauge railway tracks had to be put down to ensure their easy transportation, and special wagons had to be designed by the London, Midland and Scottish Railway Company to protect the paintings from fluctuations of humidity and temperature. Hygrometers monitored the effects of temperature on the paintings with unprecedented accuracy.

In addition to paintings, the National Gallery's library was also transferred to the underground quarry, for which controlled temperature was also imperative. One unexpected scholarly benefit of the transfer was that it allowed Davies to assess the collection afresh, and as a result, pioneering new editions of *The Early Netherlandish School*, *The British School*, *The French School*, and *The Early Italian School* were all brought out at this time.

Dame Myra Hess attacks Beethoven, 1943

FELIX MAN / GETTY IMAGES

Ian Rawlins, a railway expert, was responsible for seeing that the heroic removal of the paintings went smoothly. At every turn unforeseen challenges tested his ingenuity. In the case of Van Dyck's *Equestrian Portrait of Charles I*, one of the largest paintings in the collection, Rawlins and his team had to hollow out a road leading to the quarry to enable the special cart—expressly designed to transport the painting, dubbed the "Elephant Case"—to pass under a low bridge. And then it was only possible after the cart's tires were deflated. Here, truly, was a close-run thing.

That the paintings and library were stored underground made them vulnerable to other threats besides aerial bombardment. As Bosman observes, "The brick chambers protected the pictures from minor falls, but there was always the possibility of the whole collection being buried in a catastrophic collapse." Davies was fully cognizant of this:

> It would have been useless to save the pictures from bombs, only to crush them in Wales with tons of slate falling on them. Manod quarry roofs are safer than most; nevertheless, the pictures could not walk away like a gang of quarrymen from any doubtful section.

When a section was identified as liable to give way, 300 paintings were removed within seven hours. Engineers later concluded that the temperature-controlled heating of the chambers had made the rock above more than usually friable. However, this would be Manod's only failure. Once the success of the transfer spread through Britain's cultural grapevine, other museums joined the National Gallery in making Manod their wartime home, including the Courtauld Institute, the National Portrait Gallery, Sir John Soane's Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

In his autobiography, Clark paid Davies this witty tribute:

> He had always been a solitary character, and was said by his contemporaries in Cambridge to have emerged from his rooms only after dark; so this sunless exile was not as painful to him as it would have been for a less unusual man. In the morning

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he would emerge, thin and colorless as a ghost, and would be driven up to the caves, carrying with him a strong torch and several magnifying glasses. With these he would examine every square millimeter of a few pictures. In twelve years I hardly ever saw him look at a picture as whole, but at a series of small areas of paint, which he usually found to be more or less damaged. . . . These revealed to him how insecure was the evidence for all attributions in early art, and for the very existence of certain painters. It is indeed true that the history of art, like all history, is to a large extent an agreed fable, and perhaps only someone as passionately skeptical as Martin Davies could have exposed so many convenient fallacies.

Not only did Kenneth Clark save the National Gallery collection, he also saw to it that the museum remained "a defiant outpost of culture right in the middle of a bombed and shattered metropolis." Accordingly, in 1941, and with all the Old Masters in storage, he mounted an exhibition of contemporary painting, including works by Clive Bell and Graham Sutherland, which garnered high praise in some quarters but annoyed others: "Another bomb there might save posterity lighting a few bonfires in the future," one diarist wrote.

Also key to keeping the museum's cultural life going was Clark's hiring of the pianist Myra Hess who, he later recalled, had "a jolly, rolling walk, and a strong element of the old trouper." When Clark broached the idea of having lunchtime concerts, Hess thought they might be periodic. Clark insisted that they be daily. Hess took a deep breath and agreed.

Three quarters of a million people eventually attended the concerts. About the music she chose, Hess later remarked: "Everybody was very busy during the war and there was nobody to tell the people that this sort of music was over their heads. So they came and liked it." The courage it took to sit and listen to Myra Hess play Beethoven can only be appreciated by remembering that, in October 1940, a large bomb fell on the National Gallery, ruining Room XXVI (where Room 10 is today). The fact that the building next door, which now holds the Sainsbury Wing, was completely demolished shows how close the Gallery came to a similar fate.

Whatever jubilation Clark felt at war's end was fleeting. Although he took some pleasure in personally choosing the first paintings to be transported back to the museum, including Bellini's *Doge Leonardo Loredan* and Titian's *Noli Me Tangere*, events beyond London gave the war's sequel an inexpellable gloom.

"The brutal Russian occupation of Berlin, the discovery and visible documentation of the German extermination camps, these and a dozen other ghastly revelations filled my mind," he wrote. "I felt that European civilization could never again recover its confidence and its equilibrium." Whether this will have been proved right is anyone's guess—though the European response so far to the gathering threat of Islamic terrorism does not augur well.

The National Gallery in Wartime is an entertaining, informative, cautionary book, which everyone interested in London, the Battle of Britain, or art will thoroughly enjoy. ♦

Capital Idea

How the market economy is to everyone's advantage.

BY MICHAEL TAUBE

Capitalism has played a crucial role toward greater influence and respect for private ownership, trade liberalization, and free market economics. At the same time, there are few economic ideas or concepts that have historically had the ability to generate such raw emotion. Karl Marx declared that his "object in life is to dethrone God and destroy capitalism" and Upton Sinclair wrote that "fascism is capitalism plus murder." George Bernard Shaw once noted, "With the exception of capitalism, there is nothing so revolting as revolution."

A World of Wealth
How Capitalism Turns Profit into Progress
by Thomas G. Donlan
FT Press, 240 pp., $24.99

Today, you can still find the occasional radical standing on a soapbox at Speakers' Corner blasting away at capitalism. But he or she is not alone—especially in the midst of the current financial crisis. The list of doubters includes economists, small business owners, large corporations, and a surprising number of so-called conservative thinkers.

What's the beef? It seems to be pretty wide-ranging. There are business leaders who will only cheer for capitalism when it works in their favor. There are individuals who don't trust an economic concept they perceive only helps Big Government, Big Oil, and Big Tobacco. There are anti-globalization activists who believe in conspiracy theories of a small cabal of capitalists controlling the levers of the global marketplace.

With so much misinformation about capitalism available for public consumption, it's important to dispel the wide-ranging myths and reemphasize the virtues. And few people are in a better position to discuss the benefits of capitalism than Thomas G. Donlan. Donlan is the editorial page editor at *Barron's National Business and Financial Weekly* and for 15 years has written one of the most thought-provoking columns on economics and politics that you'll ever find. He's a conservative by modern definition, and

Michael Taube is a former speechwriter for Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper.

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his appreciation for classical liberalism always shines through. His writing is straightforward, articulate, and not blinded by partisan loyalty. Donlan will criticize Democrats *and* Republicans who have strayed away from the principles of small government and free market ideology. (And by way of disclosure I've written a couple of columns in *Barron's* under his stewardship.)

In *A World of Wealth* Donlan sets out to prove that "free markets are effective" and "capitalism provides superior solutions to most of our looming problems." He wisely refrains from the temptation to concoct a response of academic proportions, and uses simple language and real-world examples such as taxes, health care, and the environment. Donlan takes on capitalism's critics at their core values: the issues that matter most to *them*, and the issues they perceive that capitalism has destroyed. To his credit, he succeeds both in promoting capitalism and debunking its many myths and detractors.

For example, when it comes to buying and selling energy, the capitalist should always favor higher prices rather than cheaper rates. Why? "A high price for energy reduces demand by punishing waste," writes Donlan, while a "low price does little to make people want to use energy frugally."

It's quite logical, really. While lower prices might make us feel better in the short run, they increase the temptation for people to overuse energy sources and waste this valuable resource. As Donlan points out, "nothing in capitalism demands that we waste resources and labor," and capitalists by nature support market-driven strategies to determine the "lowest possible cost" of an item. With a higher cost for energy at a market-driven price level, an energy shortage is far less likely.

What about free trade? While the Patrick Buchanan School of Protectionism certainly has its base, today's capitalists would more likely support open trade borders and the free exchange of goods. Donlan correctly notes that there is a long history of American protectionism—including the protective tariffs introduced by Alexander Hamilton, and North-South struggles over trade and tariffs in the 1820s—but Americans who view free trade as a "painful form of foreign aid" are missing the real benefits: expanded creativity and efficiency, economies of scale, technological spillover, and import competition. Real free trade leads to new economic opportunities, more domestic and international jobs, and more freedom of choice.

The capitalist take on taxes is clear and simple: Keep them low and equal. Donlan describes the benefits of George W. Bush's reduction of top marginal tax rates: This strategy enabled high-income earners to acquire more money and shoulder a greater percentage of the tax burden. Hence, "lower tax rates produced higher tax takes" and, by 2007, "higher economic growth and lower tax avoidance covered the loss of revenue from lower rates."

At the same time, Donlan decries the Robin Hood principle since it is "unjust to tax a dollar of income differently depending on who earned it." So Donlan supports the notion of a simpler tax system—and a flat-rate tax based on either income or consumption—to create fairness rather than the "progressive" system currently in place.

On health care, Donlan rejects universality and supports a market-based model that supports choice and price competition. Capitalists should be naturally offended by universal health care, which is neither efficient nor free, and is inefficient *and* unaffordable since it will "limit available drugs and treatments or force patients to wait for them." The more responsible strategy would be to have "national competition in health insurance." As he envisions it:

Imagine hundreds of companies competing for business on the basis of price and service, as if they were selling homeowners' insurance or investments. To keep costs low, they could work with groups assembled by churches, social clubs, neighborhood organizations, credit unions, banks, professional group assemblers, and, yes, even employers. Can everybody afford such a system? At least as well as they can now—and probably far better. For those who cannot afford it, government welfare departments could subsidize premiums directly or put cash in the hands of those capable of making their own choices.

One of the more impressive chapters in this impressive volume deals with the essential elements of capitalism: investment and invention. Donlan examines aspects of some 200 years of economic progress in a mere 12 pages, including the dawn of British wealth in mining and milling, the manufacturing of cost-effective iron and steel, the birth of money and finance during the Industrial Revolution, technological progress, and Thomas Edison's second greatest invention after the light bulb, "the system for generating, distributing, and selling electricity." He also explores capitalism's creative component, "that neither material things nor money are enough to create wealth. . . . Commerce is the constant conversion of things into money, and money into things."

Capitalism has proven that the invention of new products, combined with investment opportunities and strategies, has made our society stronger. While there may have been initial concern about prosperity and population growth, it has turned out that "prosperity converts people into consumers, increasing the market for goods, and enough prosperity creates security and reduces people's desire for large families." In Donlan's view, this capitalist "strategy" has changed the face of Europe, North America, and Japan, and is starting to have economic effects in China and India.

My guess is that there will be a handful of people who will whip through these chapters, skim reviews like this one, and say, "Why should I read the whole thing? *We already know this*." Well, yes and no. Most individuals know why they believe in capitalism, but very few produce supporting arguments in favor of it. In a society like ours, if we are going to defend the ideas that matter to us—capitalism, democracy, liberty, free speech, free markets—it's important that we grasp what they mean, what they do, and how they benefit us. Thomas Donlan's is a spirited defense of all that is good about capitalism. It will fortify its supporters, and challenge critics to put their beliefs to the test. ♦

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Is Ugly Beautiful?

Standing athwart Francis Bacon's reputation, yelling 'Stop!' BY HENRIK BERING

The day jazz died can be pinpointed with great accuracy: It was the day Charlie Parker put his alto sax to his lips and started sounding like Woody Woodpecker on speed.

With the beboppers, jazz became clannish, undanceable, and incomprehensible, something reserved for their fellow cultists. The pianist Bud Powell was often so strung out on heroin that they had to blink a flashlight in his eyes to tell him when to stop his frenzied hammering. Understandably, people tuned out in droves, and jazz, up till then a vigorous music form which had helped sustain morale in World War II, died a well-deserved death.

Francis Bacon, 1976

BERNARD GOTFRYD / HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

Henrik Bering is a writer and critic.

With painting, and over a much longer period, the same signs of dissolution are observable. Artists have engaged in a determined pursuit of the sensational, the garish, the morally and politically offensive—the latter nowhere better illustrated than when the Norwegian artist Odd Nerdrum portrayed Andreas Baader (of the Baader Meinhof terrorist gang) as Christ being murdered in his cell by government jailers. For the past century practitioners have been involved in endless, barren debate about the nature of "art" itself, a debate that has been going on since Marcel Duchamp's famous exhibition of a urinal in Paris in 1917, signifying that anything you put into a museum can be viewed as art. It is the context that decides.

But rather than die out like jazz, modern art has triumphed, and nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in auction prices: Earlier this year Damien Hirst collected £111 million for pickled animals, old cigarette butts, and empty pill glasses. Last year, Andy Warhol's *Green Car Crash* brought in $71.7 million, and recently Francis Bacon has been going through the roof: Two of his triptychs—one featuring his dead lover George Dyer cavorting on the beach with a black umbrella, the other a veritable abattoir of entrails and hot reeking blood—brought in £26 million and $86 million respectively, while the ruler of Qatar shelled out £26 million for one of his screaming popes.

When faced with art's equivalent of bebop's furious noise, why do our eyes tolerate what our ears refuse? Most people will admit (privately, if you catch them sufficiently late in the evening) that they might not necessarily want to hang this stuff on their own walls; but to risk ridicule or be dismissed as hopelessly philistine by publicly dissenting from the experts is something very few are willing to do. Safer to parrot what we learned in art class: Ugly is beautiful.

The case of Francis Bacon (1909-1992) provides an instructive example of how a sordid little life is invested with huge significance. As portrayed in his close friend Daniel Farson's biography (*The Gilded Gutter Life of Francis Bacon*), Bacon was certainly a rum one. Having been tossed out by his wealthy Irish family for dressing up in his mother's underwear, he set up shop as an artist in London, where Soho's seedy gay bars became his universe. But instead of sailors he went for types like the Kray brothers, London's famed gangster duo, dangerous men in suits. And when he came into money, like many like-minded artists and writers he descended on Tangier, where male prostitution was rife.

Bacon was a sadomasochist. When the British consul in Tangier once bumped into a badly bruised Bacon, the consul complained to the local head of police, who politely interrupted: "Pardon me, but the artist loves it." At parties George Dyer, a petty thief, would pull off his belt: "Are you ready for a thrashin' yet, Francis?"

According to Farson, the decor in Bacon's chaotic South Kensington studio consisted of two photos of Joseph Goebbels and Heinrich Himmler—"representing the apotheosis of the hard men he admired"—along with Velasquez's portrait of Pope Innocent X, a Christ on Via Dolorosa, a hippopotamus, and a man, and an ape. Bacon also derived inspiration from a medical textbook on diseases of the mouth (amply illustrated, of course) and a whole library on skin diseases.

His fascination with violence and disease was reflected in his favorite motifs of screaming popes encased in glass cages, copulating male bodies, savagely abbreviated torsos, paralytic children, nudes with their faces dis-

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torted into snarls, George Dyer sitting on a toilet or throwing up, a crucifix with a Nazi armband, nightmarish renderings of his various lovers.

Bacon would try out the blurry effects for his distorted portraits by smearing his make-up and studying the effects in the mirror. Aeschylus' line "the reek of human blood is laughter to my heart" was one of his favorite quotations. Bacon was also big on traffic accidents: "If you see someone lying on the pavement in the sunlight," he said, "with the blood streaming from him, that is in itself—the color of the blood against the pavement—very invigorating . . . exhilarating."

Long before his death Bacon was hailed as Britain's greatest modern painter, the master of despair. Farson quotes the art historian John Richardson: "By holding a mirror up to our degenerate times Bacon proves himself to be one of the most moral artists of the day. Far from titillating us, he castigates us." Farson is honest enough also to include an opposing view from the critic Richard Dorment: "It is a cliché to say that Francis Bacon's lifelong theme has been despair. There is something here more deliberate, more chosen, and more willed than despair. Something vicious, and purely evil."

That sounds about right. As Paul Johnson has asked, why should we admire sentiments and urges in an artist which we would find abhorrent in anyone else? Great art can certainly shock—Goya's drawings from the Peninsular War, Rubens's crucifixions—but those artists shocked with a purpose. For an artist to limit his definition of art to its ability to provoke is absurdly restrictive. Art can serve to uplift, make us reflect, laugh, fortify us against misfortune, even just be beautiful. To the argument that, after two world wars and Auschwitz, beauty is dead or pointless, it can just as easily be argued that beauty is needed more than ever.

The demand for newness is equally crippling. It is nonsense to argue that there is nothing more for art to do, everything having been done: Writers still write after Shakespeare and Tolstoy. Most insulting is the critical insistence that the artist must be sociopathic to have something to offer. Rubens was a diplomat and Leonardo could do whatever he put his mind to; the problem today is that, since no demands are made on craftsmanship, anybody can call himself an artist.

A gigantic industry has grown up around this doctrine. Cathedrals have been built to house contemporary art, academic careers have been made to explain it, huge sums have been invested in it. You can hardly expect a rich collector like the Briton Charles Saatchi, who has supported artists who put genitals on children's faces and used elephant dung for a portrait of the Virgin Mary, and whose most recent acquisition is a portrait of Himmler in a lemon green uniform, to admit that he has made a dreadful mistake for which he is profoundly sorry.

So if dissenting views are to be heard, they must come from outside. But few conservatives seem willing to engage in the fight, perhaps because they find contemporary art so profoundly demoralizing. Of course, you can choose to treat the art scene as delicious comedy, putting on show the delusions of silly, self-important people. But isn't art too important for that? Ceding the field to savages, and cutting ourselves off from a key strength of Western culture, seems cavalier. ♦

The Chinese Wall

It separates reality from wishful thinking in the West.

BY ELLEN BORK

Last March, the largest demonstrations against Chinese rule since the late 1980s took place in Lhasa and spread beyond the boundaries of the official "Tibet Autonomous Region" to neighboring Tibetan areas in neighboring provinces. The Chinese responded by arresting and prosecuting monks, vilifying the Dalai Lama, and launching a campaign of political indoctrination.

With the Olympics only months away, the suppression briefly focused attention on China's policies since its occupation in the 1950s. As a concession to international protests, Beijing agreed to a meeting with representatives of the Dalai Lama—though its policies toward Tibet remain unchanged. In addition to religious persecution, these include massive population transfers of Han Chinese and infrastructure projects.

China's Great Train
Beijing's Drive West and the Campaign to Remake Tibet
by Abrahm Lustgarten
Times, 320 pp., $26

The China Price
The True Cost of China's Competitive Advantage
by Alexandra Harney
Penguin, 352 pp., $25.95

Empire of Lies
The Truth About China in the 21st Century
by Guy Sorman
Encounter, 325 pp., $25.95

One of the most grandiose of these projects is the Qinghai Tibet Railroad, linking Lhasa to Beijing, and the subject of *China's Great Train*. First conceived by Mao, the railroad is more political imperative than commercial proposition. China's leaders hope it will help them secure Tibet's international borders, subjugate the Tibetan Buddhist population, and extract abundant natural resources.

Here are the elements of a great story. An audacious construction

Ellen Bork works on human rights at Freedom House.

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project requires innovation in a harsh environment. The builders must find a way to secure tracks on top of unstable permafrost. The head engineer nearly drowns in quicksand. Altitude sickness kills at least one worker, after which China stops disclosing deaths. The locals hardly benefit. Few Tibetans find work on the railroad, towns are relocated, and the landscape and culture are degraded.

Unfortunately, the narrative proceeds in a disjointed way, culminating in an anticlimactic journey to Lhasa on the train. The awkward writing distracts from the compelling and urgent problems faced by Tibetans and those who wish to help them resist Beijing's destruction of their culture and society.

The China Price tackles a subject Americans take even more seriously than the oppression of Tibet: cheap Chinese imports. This is a tightly written, thoughtful account of the working conditions and economic incentives behind China's production of consumer goods for overseas markets. Alexandra Harney resists relying on caricatures—enslaved workers toiling around the clock, happy to earn a Yuan—but some stock villains do make an appearance, such as the unscrupulous factory manager who dupes Wal-Mart's obtuse (or worse) inspector with a "shadow factory" set up near the real one, complete with phony timecards and other faked evidence of compliance with labor standards. Wal-Mart and other manufacturers come in for more sympathetic treatment when Harney explains the complex problems companies face in monitoring their operations, and the contradictory outcomes well-intentioned efforts sometimes produce.

To report *The China Price* Harney bunked in a dormitory with young women who traveled from their rural hometowns, with little money and no skills, to find jobs in boomtowns. They are indefatigable in the face of long hours and spartan living conditions, probably because their prospects at home are so poor. With little to lose, Harney argues, this generation of migrant workers, the second since the beginning of China's economic reforms, is savvier about their options, and more assertive. One excellent chapter deals with a struggling human rights movement, which tries to use existing laws and regulations to secure compensation for horrendous workplace injuries and illnesses.

"The balance of power, long tilted in favor of factories," Harney concludes, "has begun to shift slightly, but inexorably, toward labor." Maybe—but she goes too easy on the central authorities, whom she criticizes mainly for lax oversight of local officials rather than for a one-party Communist system that (among other things) jails labor and anticorruption activists.

Lhasa during the Olympics

GUANG NIU / GETTY IMAGES

Guy Sorman does not neglect the Communist party in *Empire of Lies*, a bracing, polemical, and encyclopedic account of its pathologies, among which are corruption, forced abortion, and social unrest. During a recent year-long trip to encounter "representative[s] of the present debate between the authoritarian power structure and its opponents," Sorman meets with dissidents, religious believers, Tibetans, and others who belie the conflation of China with the Communist party that pervades much thinking about China in the West.

Western policy is premised on the notion that economic growth will lead inexorably to reform. On a visit to a party school in Shanghai, Sorman asks about human rights and government accountability: "The Party listens to the people and addresses all of their concerns," the school's head tells him. "Western style democracy would mean going backward for China." When Sorman's interpreter wonders (out of earshot) if the cadres really believe such nonsense, he tells her that "the Party's real thinking and the training that it imparts have less to do with content than with the incessant repetition of these circumlocutions."

Sorman places his hopes with the many dissidents he meets, such as Ding Zilin, who for nearly 20 years has been trying to make the government accountable for the 1989 massacre of democracy protesters, including her son; a leading lawyer in the human rights defense movement; and Liu Xia, an artist married to a dissident intellectual who calls herself a Jew to identify herself with victims of another totalitarian regime.

Empire of Lies was originally published in France, and some passages are directed toward French intellectuals and politicians in ways that may seem irrelevant to American readers. No matter. While Americans love to mock Europeans for their slavish deference to Chinese leaders, on human rights and security matters the West is united in an approach built on the mistaken assumptions Sorman illustrates. ♦

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Bombay and Son

An Anglo-Indian film is Dickensian, in the best sense of the word. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

Stunned and in a state approaching bliss, I sat through every second of the closing credits of *Slumdog Millionaire* thinking about Charles Dickens, its artistic and spiritual progenitor. Does anyone read Dickens anymore?

Slumdog Millionaire
Codirected by Danny Boyle and Loveleen Tandan

Among the British novelists of the 19th century, Jane Austen has grown so popular over the past two decades that a bestselling novel was written about a book club dedicated to her. It is possible to engage literary-minded people in a discussion of Anthony Trollope, or George Eliot. These days, though, it matters little that Charles Dickens was the greatest prose stylist the English language has ever produced and wove as no one has before or since the disparate strands of classic storytelling—realism and fancy, the natural and the supernatural, psychological character study and broad comic caricature—into a glorious tapestry. We have lost the taste for him and his work. Why would this be?

I think it's because there is not a moment's ironic detachment in his fiction. His urgent, passionate, long-winded, crazily plotted, epic novels demand that we read them earnestly—that we not shy away from the sentimentality that drips from them, for example. Dickens famously cried as he wrote the death scene of the saintly child Paul Dombey in *Dombey and Son*. We are more inclined these days to share Oscar Wilde's witty and mocking view of another Dickens character's demise, that "one would have to have a heart of stone not to read of the death of Little Nell without laughing."

Wilde's ironic distance is a critical gift; it allows readers to resist cheap manipulation. But it is also limiting, because Dickens is not resorting to an authorial trick in these cases. If he had been, Dickens would not have wept over Paul Dombey. It is, rather, a bruising acknowledgment of the common tragedies of life, in which goodness and innocence are not enough to spare an angelic youth from the ravages of a harsh fate.

There have been more translations of Dickens to film than of any other writer save Shakespeare. That is fitting, since Dickens was the most cinematic of novelists, anticipating storytelling shortcuts that would be brought to fruition by the moving picture 75 years later. In *A Christmas Carol*, for example, he describes brilliantly an image of time passing that would come to be called the "lap dissolve":

> The Ghost smiled thoughtfully, and waved its hand: saying as it did so, "Let us see another Christmas!" Scrooge's former self grew larger at the words, and the room became a little darker and more dirty. The panels shrunk, the windows cracked; fragments of plaster fell out of the ceiling, and the naked laths were shown instead; but how all this was brought about, Scrooge knew no more than you do.

Here, a few pages later, Dickens invents the "slam cut": "Although they had but that moment left the school behind them, they were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city, where shadowy passengers passed and repassed."

In some ways, Dickens actually taught filmmakers how to tell a story visually, even though he did it in word pictures. Still, "Dickensian" is the last word I would have expected to apply to the work of the British filmmaker Danny Boyle, who made *Slumdog Millionaire* with the assistance of an Indian director named Loveleen Tandan. Boyle's previous work, most notably a black comedy about Edinburgh junkies called *Trainspotting*, and the zombies-in-London horror flick *28 Days Later*, is characterized by all manner of herky-jerky, up-to-the-minute visuals that usually have the opposite effect on a viewer from the cinematic techniques developed by Dickens. They are distancing. They never fail to remind the viewer he is sitting in a theater or at home in front of a television.

And yet something magical happens in *Slumdog Millionaire*. This is not only a heartfelt movie, it is a film bereft of irony, one that takes the predicaments and woes and victories of its characters with the utmost seriousness. It tells the story of an illiterate 18-year-old Muslim boy named Jamal working in an international call center in Bombay. He gets himself on the Indian version of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* and is suspiciously successful. How is it that he, who knows nothing, can answer the questions posed to him? The movie is structured as an interrogation by a police detective who is certain Jamal is a fraud. As he explains the answer to each question, the story of his improbable life unfolds.

I don't want to say more about *Slumdog Millionaire*. But the parallels to Dickens are everywhere in the screenplay by Simon Beaufoy, which was taken from a 2003 novel called *Q&A* by an Indian diplomat named Vikas Swarup that was an international bestseller. There are orphans and crooks, Fagins and Magwitches and Uriah Heeps, abandoned children, picaresque journeys, unlikely coincidences. Bombay teems with vivid and wretched life just as London does in *Oliver Twist* and *Little Dorrit*, two books about the miseries of children who must either overcome their straitened circumstances or fall into corruption, despair, and death.

Slumdog Millionaire makes the case that what we need now is a little more Dickens and a little less Wilde. It is one of the best movies I have ever seen. ♦

John Podhoretz, editorial director of Commentary, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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President George W. Bush and President-elect Barack Obama met in the Oval Office of the White House on Monday, November 10, 2008.

—News Item

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